

# **A CRITICAL STUDY OF UPANAYANA SAMSKĀRA**

*By*

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*Under the guidance of*

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## CERTIFICATE

I certify that this thesis on 'A Critical Study of Upanayana Saṃskāra' by Prof. H. V. Narasihma Murthy, represents his original work and has not been submitted for any other diploma or degree of any University. The work has been carried out by him at Sri Durga Parameshwari Temple First Grade College, Kateel, D.K. under my guidance and supervision.



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## DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this thesis entitled 'A Critical Study of Upanayana Saṃskāra' is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other similar title.

This thesis is prepared under the guidance of Dr. G. N. Bhat, M.A., Ph.D., Ex-Principal, SDPT First Grade College, Kateel.

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*Kundapura*  
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**H. V. Narasimha murthy**

## PREFACE

The present study is an attempt towards constructing a picture of Upanayana Samskāra from the point of view of its socio-religious foundation and implication. It is an effort to think out and follow as closely as possible along the lines of the Hindu thought and tradition and to portray and interpret, so far as one can, both critically and comprehensively, the Hindu scriptures and theories in their proper and original perspective and setting.

Millions follow blindly, without questioning, the numerous social customs and religious rites, blind folded, without ever bothering themselves about their significance and purpose. When such a blind follower is questioned, he is confounded. The confusion could turn him into a non-believer. It could also expose his rituals to ridicule and contempt. So there is an urge to delve deep into the meaning and purpose of these customs, beliefs and rituals and unravel the mystery in which they are shrouded. Hence here is an attempt to study seriously one of the sixteen Samskāras i.e., Upanayana, trying to grasp the meaning, purpose and significance there of. My purpose is to examine whether our customs and rituals like Upanayana are meaningless exercises, or that they are pregnant with deep significance and that there is a purpose and meaning behind every such custom or ritual.

I believe that my study will help on otherwise foolish looking silly follower of meaningless customs and rituals become an intelligent and informed person, who can defend his faith against onslaughts from adversaries or against ridicule from half-baked intellectuals.

The most striking point about the Upanayana is that by virtue of its performance the initiated is ranked as a dvija or twice-born. This transformation of man's personality by means of religious ceremonies and the initiation into the Gāyatri Mantra compares well with the Christian rite of Baptism, circumcision of Mohammadans and Bar Mitzvah of Jews. These are regarded as sacraments and carry with them a spiritual effect to reform the life of man. Anthropological studies have shown that most of the religious rituals are only systematised instinctive actions. All traditions of the world have only attempted to formalise, codify and systematise man's natural, instinctive and unstoppable movements and actions and have tried to invest them with beauty, rhythm and order.

If we look beneath the surface of the ceremony, we cannot but recognise in it the expression of a deep human conviction that man, due to his contact with the world, loses his native purity and that he must be born again to enter the spiritual kingdom again. So, an endeavour is made here to bring out such convictions and significances of Upanayana Saṃskāra through comparative study and to link and piece together the scattered materials found in the Vēdas, the Brāhmaṇas, the Gṛhya Sūtras, the smṛtis and the later treatises into a comprehensive whole and to supply a historical perspective for their proper understanding.

Further, the creative period of the Saṃskāras has passed away. Many of them, eg: the pre-natal Saṃskāras and a few of the childhood are not generally performed at present; so they have become the thing of the past. The rest are performed by orthodox families

only and here too, in a distorted form. The only current Saṃskāras are the Nāmakaraṇa (Name giving), the Upanayana (Initiation), the Vivāha (Marriage ceremonies) and the Antyēṣṭi (Funeral ceremonies). Even among these four, the Upanayana is not performed by all the twice-born today. So here an attempt is made to study whether it is necessary to revive the Saṃskāras in general and Upanayana in particular by examining their relevance in this modern society.

This thesis, I hope, will be a small inducement or stimulus to at least a few who wish to have a deeper insight into the purpose and significance of Upanayana Saṃskāra.

### Contents of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into ten chapters. In the first chapter which is an introductory one, I have touched upon only the introductory aspects of the Saṃskāras, which obviously cover a wider range. As the Saṃskāras have very important bearings of the life and activities of the Hindus, the study of the origin and development of the Saṃskāras has its special importance. The Saṃskāras were introduced in the society since Vedic time and texts hardly furnish any clue to the understanding of the circumstances under which they have originated. In my attempt to trace the origin of the Saṃskāras, I have in this thesis first of all dilated on the conception of sin since the Vedic days. Then I have discussed in short the question of śuddhi just to show that out of the concept of sin and śuddhi, the idea of purification, which appears to be one of the principal purposes of Saṃskāras, has emanated. Next I have dwelt on the meaning and purpose of the Saṃskāras. The element of purification

has been pointed out to be the principal end of all the Saṃskāras. From the data I have collected from the Gṛhya Sūtras and the Smṛti Saṃhitas, it has been shown that the Saṃskāras lead to the moral and spiritual upliftment of the individual. The number and classification of the Saṃskāras have also been discussed with all their details backed by textual authorities. The constituents of Saṃskāras have been discussed in details in the next place.

The second chapter deals with the origin and development of Upanayana Saṃskāra. From the very conception of the human embryo to the final cremation of the human body the Saṃskāras have been prescribed by the Śāstrakāras. Upanayana is one of the important Saṃskāras which aims at the transformation of an individual from an animalistic static into a responsible human being. The derivation of the word 'Upanayana', its antiquity, concept of Upanayana in Vēdas, Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣhaths etc. and its purpose are discussed in this chapter.

In the third chapter an attempt is made to study that how Upanayana of Hindus, circumcision of Muslims and Baptism of Christians and similar initiation rituals of other religions have much in common. Because such a comparative study of ritual, ceremonies and rites of the world would throw a great amount of light on the common features of all religious traditions of the world.

In the fourth chapter "Upanayana Saṃskāra : Women and Śūdras" - a number of evidences are given to prove that in the early period Upanayana Saṃskāra was not denied

The fifth chapter deals with the components of Upanayana Saṁskāra. Astrological aspects of Upanayana, the proper age for three Varnas, the auspicious time for it, rules about the skin, the garments, the girdle and the staff of the Brahmachārin of different Varnas etc. are discussed in this chapter. History of Yajñōpavīta from ancient times and rules for manufacturing and wearing it are also come under this chapter.

Significance of Gāyatrī is discussed in the sixth chapter. This sacred deity personifies the Jyōthi or light of Agni, which symbolises the world of Vedic experience and activity. A common Ṛk in all Vēdas, Gāyatrī is offered as a prayer to invoke the splendour of the Divine that confers the highest consciousness and knowledge. With the initiation of Gāyatrī during Upanayana a person gets a new birth. Meditation of Gāyatrī and Gāyatrī chart are given in Appendix No. I and II.

Proceedings of Upanayana constitutes the central theme of the Seventh chapter. The rituals like joint meal, mounting the stone, taking the charge, the commandments, the round for alms and other symbolical performances and their significance - all are discussed. The whole procedure of Upanayana is more elaborately described in this chapter. A pictorial view of these proceedings is given in appendix.

**NO. 1** CLOTHES LINE, 20' x 11'  
MATERIAL: COTTON



"Upanayana Saṃskāra - A psychological view and science of change behind it" (the eight chapter) analyses that how Upanayana is a psycho-therapy to develop the personality of a man. It is scientifically proved that giving proper Saṃskāras in the early childhood is more important and useful and it can change the whole personality of the child.

The ninth chapter deals with the duties of Brahmachārin. The first stage of life, the brahmacharya, is the period of education. So the system of education in ancient days is the main theme of this chapter. Religious duties of the brahmachārin like Sandhyā, Agnikārya etc. are discussed on the light of the codes of conduct prescribed by various sūtrakāras and śāstrakāras.

In chapter ten, I have discussed in short about the present day position of Upanayana and other Saṃskāras and a humble attempt is made to suggest the best way in which we can perform Upanayana Saṃskāra in the present situation. Proper orientation about the significance of Upanayana to the parents and the boy to be initiated, simplification of rites, properly trained priests, appointment of a qualified priest to teach Sandhyāvandana and Agnikārya to the initiated etc. are some of the suggestions.

In the Appendix a Bibliography is provided.

In short, a humble attempt is made to touch upon a very vast subject in this thesis.

## CHAPTER - I

## SAMSKĀRA : ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND ORIGIN

For thinking minds to blossom, for arts and science to flourish, the first condition necessary is a settled society providing security and leisure. A rich culture is impossible with a community of nomads where people struggle for life and die of privation. Fate called India to a spot where nature was free with her gifts and every prospect was pleasing. The Himalayas, with their immense range and elevation on one side and sea on the others, helped to keep India free from invasion for a long time. Bounteous nature yielded abundant food and man was relieved of the toil and struggle for existence. The Indians never felt that the world was a field of battle where man struggled for power, wealth and domination. When we do not need to waste our energies on problems of life on earth exploiting nature and controlling the forces of the world, we begin to think of the higher life, how to live more perfectly in the spirit. Perhaps an enervating climate inclined the Indian to rest and retirement. The huge forests with their wide leafy avenues afforded great opportunities for the devout soul to wander peacefully through them, dream strange dreams and burst forth into joyous songs. World weary men go out on pilgrimages to these scenes of nature, acquire inward peace, listening to the rush of winds and torrents, the music of birds and leaves, and return whole of heart and fresh in spirit. It was in the Āśramas and Tapōvanas or forest hermitages that the thinking men of India meditated on the deeper problems of

existence. The security of life, the wealth of natural resources, the freedom from worry, the detachment from the cares of existence and the absence of a tyrannous practical interest, stimulated the higher life of India, with the result that we find from the beginnings of history an impatience of spirit, a love of wisdom and a passion for the saner pursuits of the mind.

Helped by natural conditions and provided with the intellectual scope to think at the implication of things, the Indians escaped the doom which Plato pronounced to be the worst of all, viz.- the hatred of reason. In many countries of the world, reflection on the nature of existence is a luxury of life. The serious moments are given to action, while the pursuit of philosophy comes up as a parenthesis. In ancient India philosophising was not an auxiliary to any other science or art, but always held a prominent position of independence. This tendency of thinking is responsible undoubtedly for ascription of seriousness, gravity and intricacies to any prescription of the Śāstrakāras. It is for this reason that we trace purpose and meaning in all acts of the seers of ancient India. But unfortunately we are so outdistanced by time from our ancestors that most of the meanings and purposes for these Śāstric prescriptions have faded away. We therefore are to work on conjectures and surmises. The social circumstances under which the laws were formulated have completely changed. As such our conclusions are bound to be limited by conditions. This is applicable in almost all cases of laws of ancient India and it is more so in cases of Saṃskāras.

In the present thesis I propose at first to trace the factors connected with the origin of Saṃskāras. The term Saṃskāra as we shall see, has the element of purification in it. Purification presupposes sin or impurity. We therefore, first of all confine ourselves to the study of the conception of sin.

In the R̥gvēda the conceptions of righteousness found clear expression. It appears therefore that in the Saṃhitās the most elevated expression of the sense of sin and the desire to be set free from it is available. Varuṇa is such a God to whom the sinner addresses and he is the God who is omniscient and who of himself or by his spies knows the thoughts of men. In VII. 86-4<sup>1</sup> prayer has been offered to Varuṇa for his appeasement so that the sin committed by the sinner may be excused. The God is invoked to set free the sinner from his bonds. It is probable that the sense of sin must be considered to have been brought home to him by disease, as is admitted freely in the later hymns, VII. 89-1 to 5.<sup>2</sup> The hymns have their ethical value. They confess sin, even if they seek to explain it, they

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1 किमा॑ ग॒ आस॑ वरु॒ण ज्येष्ठं॑ यत् स्तो॒तारं॑ जि॒घांस॑सि स॒खायम्॑ ।  
प्रत॑ न्ये वोचो दू॒ळभ॑स्व॒धावोऽव॑त्वाने॒ना न म॑सा तुर॒इयाम्॑ ॥

R̥gvēda: VII: 86-4.

2 मो॒षु वरु॑णमृ॒न्मयं॑ गृहं॒ राज॑न्न॒हं ग॑मम् । मृ॒ळ्य सु॑क्षत्र मृ॒ळ्य ॥  
यदे॒मि प्र॑स्फुर॒न्निव॑ द॒तिर्न॑ध्मातो अ॒द्रिवः॑ । मृ॒ळ्य सु॑क्षत्र मृ॒ळ्य ॥  
क्र॒त्वः सम॑ह दी॒नता॑ प्र॒तीपं॑ जग॒मा शु॑चे । मृ॒ळ्य सु॑क्षत्र मृ॒ळ्य ॥  
अपां॑ म॒ध्ये त॒स्थिवांसं॑ तृ॒ष्णावि॑द॒ञ्जिता॑ रम् । मृ॒ळ्य सु॑क्षत्र मृ॒ळ्य ॥  
यत् कि॒चेदं॑ वरु॒ण दै॒व्ये ज॑ने॒भिद्रो॑हं म॒नुष्या॑ ३श्च॒ राम॑सि । अ॒चि॒त्तीय॑त्तव॒ धर्मा॑ यु॒योपि॑म॒ मान॑स्त॒स्मादे॑न॒सो दे॒वरी॑षिः ॥

R̥gvēda: VII: 89-1to5.

assume the justice of the divine anger which they seek to remove by supplication, probably accompanied by offering, though the hymns do not expressly say so.

Moreover if we find in the Ṛgvēda and predominantly in the Atharvavēda, the more primitive conception of sin as a pollution which can be removed by physical means. It is not difficult to trace remains of the earlier view in the hymns to Varuṇa. From VII. 89-1 to 5 it is plain that the sinner was afflicted by dropsy and the watery nature of the disease can hardly have failed to suggest connection with Varuṇa who is even in the Ṛgvēda closely connected with the waters. Nor is it unlikely that Varuṇa's power to loosen the bonds of sin is derived ultimately from the cleansing power of the waters.

In 1. 23. 22<sup>3</sup> waters have been described as goddesses who have been requested to carry away sin. Similarly Agni has been invoked to loosen the bonds of the sinners (V. II. 7). Conception of sin as a kind of disease is implicit in the view of inherited sin or sin which comes from contagion; sin can be obtained not merely from the father, but from the mother and other close kindred.<sup>4</sup> In other cases the kinship of sin to pollution is more

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3 इ॒द॒मा॒पः॑ प्र॒व॒ह॒त॒ यत्कि॑च॒ दु॒रि॒तं म॑यि ।  
यद्वा॒ह॒म॒भि॒द्रो॒ह॒ यद॑ वा॒ शे॒प॒ उ॒ता नृ॑तम् ॥

Ṛgvēda: I: 23-22.

4 यदे॑न॒सो मा॒तृ कृ॑ताच्छे॒षे पि॒तृ कृ॑ताच्च॒यत् ।

Atharva: V-30-4.

यदी॑दं मा॒तुर्य॑दि॒ वा पि॒तुर्नः॑ परि॒ भ्रा॒तुः पु॒त्राश्चे॑त॒स ए॒न आ॑गन् ।  
या व॑न्तो अ॒स्मान् पि॒तरः॑ स च॒न्ते तेषां॑ स॒र्वेषां॑ शि॒वो अ॑स्तु म॒न्युः ॥

Atharva: VI-116-3.

evident, the black bird, the harbinger of Nirṛti, the goddess of misfortune, by its excrement creates guilt on the person affected, the wailing of the women in the house of the dead creates a pollution of the kin, the lowing of the victim at the sacrifice lays on the sacrificer the burden of a sin which he must expiate.<sup>5</sup> Prof Keith observes:

‘Sin, therefore, it is legitimate to suppose, was to the vedic Indian primarily the actual pollution of disease present in his body and only by a gradual process of moral development was the disease interpreted as the punishment inflicted for an act or thought or word displeasing to the gods who exacted obedience to moral laws’.<sup>6</sup>

In the Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā (IV. 1. 9) sin-transfer has been referred to. In the Sāṅkyāyana Śrauta Sūtra (XVI. XVIII)<sup>7</sup> we get acquainted with facts as to how at the end of the Aśvamēdha sacrifice, the sins of the sacrificer are removed by an offering made

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य॒न्मे॒ मा॒ता य॒न्मे॒ पि॒ता भ्रा॒त॒रो य॒च्च॒ मे॒ स्या॒ यदे॒ त॒श्च॒कृ॒मा व॒यम् । त॒तो नो॒ वार॑यिष्यते॒ऽयं दे॒वो व॒न॒स्प॒तिः ।

Atharva: X - 3-8.

5 इ॒दं यत् कृ॒ष्णः श॒कु॒ निर॑भिनिष्प॒तन्न॑ पी॒प॒तत् ।  
आ॒पो मा॒ तस्मा॑त् स॒र्वस्मा॑द् दुरि॒तात् पा॒न्त्वं ह॑सः ॥  
इ॒दं यत् कृ॒ष्णः श॒कु॒ निर॑वा मृ॒क्षन्नि॑र्क॒ते ते॒ मु॒खेन॑ ।  
अ॒ग्नि॒र्मा तस्मा॑दे॒नसो॑ गा॒र्हप॑त्यः प्र मु॒ञ्च॑तु ॥

Atharva: VII - 64-112.

6 Article on Sin in Encyclopaedia of Ethics and Religion, Vol. XI. Ed. by J. Hastings, Edinburg, 1925.

7 अथ शब्दादश्वमेधावभृत एव..... अथैनमवक्रीतमुदके प्रग्राह्य समाप्तायामवभृतेष्टौ प्रागभ्युक्षणात् यदास्यावक्रीतस्यावगाढस्योदकं मुखमास्यन्देत मुखं प्रविशेत् अथास्या अध्वर्युमस्तके स्वलोहितं जुहोति भ्रूणहत्यायै स्वाहा इत्यनेन मन्त्रेण । अथानन्तरं तं पुरुषं निषेध्यन्ति निर्गमयन्ति निशब्दादूरं नयन्तीत्यर्थः ।  
तस्मिन्नवसरे स्नाता निर्गतपाप्मने अपग्रामा महापातकिनः ये ग्रामादबन्धुभिः परित्यक्तास्ते पूता भवन्ति ।

on the head of a bald repulsive-looking man who stands in the water of the concluding bath. This man at the end of the whole rite is driven away into the forest bearing with him the sins of the village out-castes. The Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra (XXVII. 17)<sup>8</sup> attributes to the water of the bath, after the sacrificer has bathed in it, the power to drive away sin from those who have offended, although they themselves have taken no part in the sacrifice. The Varuṇapraghāsa sacrifice points to some aspects of sin in the Vedic age.<sup>9</sup> In the Yajurveda we find a list which exhibits a scale of offenders ascending in heinousness. 'The tendency to invent remedies for every form of sin was developed by the priest who found profit in these performances and already in the vedic period in such works as the Sāmavidhāna Brāhmaṇa appears a literature of prāyaścitta rites intended to avert the evil consequences of error, moral, social and ritual, by processes, which in the main are those of magic, eked out with prayers and confessions of fault'.

In the later age of the Saṃhitas and the epics we find traces of the old belief in the sin transfer. The evil king must bear responsibility for the sins of the subject.<sup>10</sup> The

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8 उत्क्रान्ते यजमाने पापकृतोभ्यवयन्त्यचरित्वा व्रतानि ।

9 A. Hillbrandt; Ritual Literature: Strassburg, 1897, P. 114.

10 अधर्मादपि षड्भागो भवत्यस्य ह्यरक्षतः ।

Manu Smṛ.: VIII-304.

अरक्षितारं राजानं बलिषड्भागहारिणम् ।

तमाहुः सर्वलोकस्य समग्रमलहारकम् ॥

Manu Smṛ.: VIII - 308.

dissatisfied guest transfers his evil karma to his unhospitable host.<sup>11</sup> Even it has been asserted that a deed may not bear fruit at once, it may defer its effect until it bears fruit in a son, grandson or other descendant and a modification of the idea ascribes to the child a character derived from father or mother or both.<sup>12</sup> A wife too absorbs karma from her husband and does not stand necessarily on her own merits - a doctrine asserted in the Rāmāyaṇa<sup>13</sup> and implied in the Manusmṛti.<sup>14</sup> In strict accord with the view of sin is the multitude of means by which it can be atoned for. All the king's sin for conquest of earth may be wiped out by sacrifice if accompanied by large gifts to the priests such as cows and villages and presents to sacred bull expiate a king's breach of his oath.<sup>15</sup> Confession and penance avail to remove sins, even intentional crimes, but the same effect is accomplished even more simply by gifts to the priest and resort to places of pilgrimage.<sup>16</sup> In the Ṛgveda VII. 86. 6 a sage pleads with Varuṇa that sin is not due to a man's own power but it is rather due to fate, to surā (intoxicants), to anger, dice and heedlessness and

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11 सर्वं सुकृतमादत्ते ब्राह्मणोऽनर्चितो वसन् ॥

Manu Smṛ. III-100.

12 Mahābhārata: XII-139-22.

13 Rāmāyaṇa II-27-4.

14 अनेन नारीवृत्तेन मनोवाग्देहसंयता ।

इहाय्यां कीर्तिमाप्नोति पतिलोकं परत्र च ॥

Manu Smṛ. V-166.

पति या नाभिचरति मनोवाग्देहसंयता ।

सा भर्तृलोकानाप्नोति सद्भिः साध्वीति चोच्यते ।

Manu Smṛ. IX-29.

15 Ib. III. 33. 78f; 35-34. ii-57.

16 Manu Smṛ. XI-146; 228; 240f.



even dream state leads one to commit what is not right.<sup>17</sup> The Kauṣītaki brāhmaṇopaniṣad (III. 9) asserts that God makes man perform good or bad deeds.<sup>18</sup> Gautama observes that a man in this world is polluted by vile actions.<sup>19</sup> Similar idea is noticed in the directions of Yājñavalkya.<sup>20</sup> The Ṛgveda makes mention of seven limits, the transgression of which makes a man sinful.<sup>21</sup> The Āpastamba Dharmasūtra divides the sins into two categories, patanīya (those that cause loss of caste) and Aśucikara (those that cause impurity, though no loss of caste is caused).<sup>22</sup>

In the sūtras we find mention of different means of reducing the consequences of sin. They are many, and of them the following may be specifically mentioned: confession,<sup>23</sup> Repentance,<sup>24</sup> Prāṇāyāma,<sup>25</sup> Tapas,<sup>26</sup> Hōma,<sup>27</sup> Japa,<sup>28</sup> Dāna,<sup>29</sup> Upavāsa<sup>30</sup> and pilgrimage.<sup>31</sup>

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17 न स स्वो दक्षो वरुण धृतिः सा सुरा मन्युर्विभीदको अचित्तिः ।

अस्ति ज्यायान् क नीयस उपारे स्व प्रश्नेन नृतस्य प्रयोता ।

18 एषह्येव साधुकर्म कारयति तं यमेभ्यो लोकेभ्यो उन्निनीषते । एष उ एवाऽसाधु कर्म कारयति तं यमघो निनीषते ।

19 अथ कल्याणं पुरुषो याप्येन कर्मणा लिप्यते यथैतदयाज्ययाजनमभक्ष्यभक्षणमवद्यवदनम् शिष्टस्याक्रिया प्रतिषिद्धसेवनमिति ॥

G.D.S. III-1.2.

20 विहितस्याननुष्ठानान्निन्दितस्य च सेवनात् ।

अनिग्रहाच्चेन्द्रियाणां नरः पतनमृच्छति ॥

Yāj. III-210.

21 सप्तमर्यादाः क्व यस्ततश्चुस्तासामेकामिदं भ्यंहरो गात् ।

X-5.6.

22 Āpa. Dha. Sū. 17-21; 7-11 and 1-7. 21.19.

23 Āpa. Sh. Sū. 1-9.24. 15:1.10.28; 19.1.10-29.1.

24 Manu XI. 229-30.

25 Manu XI 248. Baudhāyana Dha. Sū. 1.31; Vaś. 26.4.

The question of Śuddhi (purification) is closely connected with the problem of sin. It has been defined in the Śuddhi Kaumudī as the state of being fit for performing rites sanctioned by the Vēdas - 'वेदबोधित कर्मार्हता'<sup>32</sup>. In the Smṛti texts the word Śuddhi is applied in relation to purification after Āśauca. Āśauca follows on birth and death - 'जनने मरणे नित्यमाशौचमनुधावति'<sup>33</sup> To mitākṣhara it is an emergent attribute which is got rid of by lapse of time or a bath and the like and is the cause of the positive direction to offer piṇḍa, water etc. and of the cessation of Vedic study and other actions - 'आशौचशब्देन च कालस्नानाद्यपनोद्यः पिण्डोदकदानादिविधेः अध्ययनादिपर्युदासस्य च निमित्तभूतः पुरुषगतः कश्चनातिशयः कथ्यते । न पुनः कर्मानधिकारमात्रम्' (on Yāj. III-1) Haradatta also harps on the same tune: 'किं पुनरिदमाशौचलक्षणम् । कर्मण्यनधिकारो भोज्यन्नतास्पृश्यता दानादिष्वनधिकारता' (on Gautama 14. 1) Śuddhi has been defined by Bhattācārya as 'removal of sin' (पापक्षय) and condition of being fit for performance of religious acts (धर्मयोग्यत्वम्)<sup>34</sup> Rudradhara in his Śuddhivivēka

26 Rg. V. X. 154.2. Chān. Upa. V. 10.1-2; Muṇḍaka Upa. 1.2.10-11.

27 Tai. Āraṇyaka II. 7.8.; Baud. Dha. Sū. II.7.1.

28 Manu XI. 46; II 85-87.

29 Gau. Dha. Sū. XIX. 16;

यत्किञ्चित्कुरुते पापं पुरुषो वृत्तिकर्षितः ।

अपि गोचर्यमात्रेण भूमिदानेन शुष्यति ॥

Vaśiṣṭa. 29.16.

30 Manu XI. 203.

31 Viṣṇu. Sh. Sū. 35.6. Parāśara XII. 58 ff.

32 P. 1.

33 Dēvala, quoted by Hārīta, P. 2.

34 Smṛticandrikā (Āśaucakāṇḍa), P.2.

specifically makes it special attribute bringing about a capacity or privilege for the performance of all dharmas.<sup>35</sup> This has been classed under two categories, one arising out of birth and one falling on death.<sup>36</sup>

From the conceptions of sin and purification, along with some spiritual ideas associated with it, has developed gradually the idea of Saṃskāras. Performance of the Saṃskāras has been directed as fit to bring about brāhmaṇya (status of a Brāhmaṇa), just as the work of painting gradually unfolds itself on account of several colours with which it is drawn.<sup>37</sup> Śabara defines the term as referring to acts which being effected makes a certain thing or person fit for a specific purpose.<sup>38</sup> In the Tantravārtika also observance of Saṃskāras has been described as offering fitness<sup>39</sup> Śaṅkara on the Vēdānta Sūtra (1. 1. 4) has classified Saṃskāras under two heads: those which remove the taints and those that generate fresh qualities.<sup>40</sup> This fits in well with our supposition that the Hindus are

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35 शुद्धिस्तावदखिलधर्माधिकारापादको धर्मविशेषः ।

D.C. Ms. No. 309 of 1887, folio 1.

36 सूतकं तु प्रवक्ष्यामि जन्ममृत्युनिमित्तकम् ।

Dakṣa. VI.1.

37 चित्रकर्म यथानेकैरङ्गैरुन्मील्यते शनैः ।

ब्राह्मण्यमपि तद्वत्स्यात् संस्कारैर्विधिपूर्वकैः ॥

Parāśara Smṛ. VIII-19.

38 संस्कारो नाम स भवति यस्मिन् जाते पदार्थो भवति योग्यः कस्यचिदर्थस्य ॥

Śabara on Jaimini III, 1.3. (P.660).

39 योग्यतामादधानाः क्रियाः संस्कारा इत्युच्यन्ते ।

Tantravārtikā P. 1078.

40 संस्कारो नाम गुणाधानेन वा स्यात् दोषापनयनेन वा ॥

believed to be charged with impurity (Āśauca) of two kinds, on the birth and death of the near relatives. That this idea of impurity was as old as the Vedic texts is backed by the direction of the Aitarēya Brāhmaṇa, where it is said that if an 'Āhitāgni partook of food from the house of him who was affected by 'Sūtaka', then the Prāyaścitta was to offer a purōdāśa cooked on eight potsheds to Agni Tantum<sup>41</sup> 'Tantu' means also 'son or progeny'; so it may be argued that it is an indication that Sūtaka is used in the Aitarēya Brāhmaṇa in the sense of impurity on birth. As to why such idea of Āśauca is accepted on birth and death, Hārīta observes that in the case of death, frustration and in case of birth gratification or juvilation, comes into the near and dear ones and this may stand as an obstacle to the proper mental make up in respect of observance of daily duties which demand mental concentration<sup>42</sup> What then Śaṅkara means to say is this, that Saṃskāras have the potentiality of removing supposed taints incurred or inherited and generating such qualities which lead to self-development and perfection. The Tantravārtika also has supporting text in favour of Śaṅkara.<sup>43</sup> In the text of mitramiśra the exact nature of Saṃskāra has been further classified. According to him Saṃskāra is a peculiar excellence due to the performance of

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41 तदाहुर्न आहिताग्निर्यदि सूतकान्नं प्राश्रीयात् का तत्र प्रायश्चित्तिरिति । सोऽग्नये तन्तुमतेऽष्टाकपालं पुरोडाशं निर्वपेत्तस्य याज्यानुवाक्ये तन्तुं तन्वन्नजसो भानुमन्वहीत्यस्य क्षाणहोमस्यतनोत सोम्या इति आहुतिं वाहवनीये जुहुयादग्नये तन्तुमते स्वाहेति ॥ Ai. Brā. 32.8.

42 अस्य च कुलव्यापित्वे कारणमाह हारीतः प्रेताभिभूतत्वाच्चावमाशौचं जीवे वृद्धियोगेन कुलस्य भवतीति । जायमानम्रियमाणयोः सम्बन्धिनां सन्तोषादसन्तोषादाभ्यां वृद्धिक्षययोगाद्वा कुलव्याप्याशौचं भवतीत्यर्थः ॥

Śuddhicandrikā on ṣaḍaśīti, P. 4.

43 योग्यता च सर्वत्र द्विप्रकाराः दोषापनयनेन गुणान्तरोपजननेन च भवति ।

Tantravārtikā, P. 1115 on Jaimini III. 8.9.

rites ordained (by the Śāstra) which resides either in the soul or the body and it also has been stated that it is of two kinds, one kind making a person eligible for performing other actions (e. g.: Upanayana renders a person eligible for Vedic study) while another kind removes the evil taint that may have been generated (eg: Jātakarma removes the taint due to seed and uterus).<sup>44</sup> Rudraskandha on Khādira Gṛhyasūtra opines likewise.<sup>45</sup> Some of the prominent writers on law have categorically declared that taints come in the life of man by birth and these are removable. Unless they are removed body does not become virtually fit for all religious and spiritual activities. Thus Manu declares that in case of dvijātis, the taints due to seed and uterus are wiped off by the hōmas performed during pregnancy and by Jātakarma, caula and the tying of the girdle of muñja grass. This body is rendered fit for the attainment of Brahma by the study of the Vēdas, by the Vratas, Homas, by the vrata called Traividya, by worship (of gods, sages and manes), by generation of sons, by the performance of five daily sacrifices and by solemn Vedic sacrifices.<sup>46</sup>

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44 तत्रात्मशरीरान्यतरनिष्ठो विहितक्रियाजन्योऽतिशयविशेषः संस्कारः । स च द्विविधः एकस्तावत् कर्मान्तराधिकारेऽनुकूलः यथोपनयनजन्यो वेदाध्ययनाद्यधिकारापादकः अपरस्तूत्यन्नेन दुरितमात्रनाशको यथा बीजगर्भसमुद्भवैर्नोनिर्बर्हणो जातकर्मादिजन्यः ।

—Vīramitrōdaya Saṃskāra Prakāśa, P. 132, Paribhāṣa Prakāśa, P. 132. Chowkambha Sanskrit Series.

45 एते गर्भाधानादयः संस्काराः शरीरं संस्कुर्वन्तः सर्वेषु अदृष्टार्थेषु कर्मसु योग्यतातिशयं कुर्वन्ति कलातिशये योग्यतातिशये च । on Khādira Gṛhyasūtra II. 3.33.

46 गार्भहोमैर्जातकर्मचौडमौञ्जीनिबन्धनैः ।

बैजिकं गार्भिकं चैनो द्विजानामपमृज्यते ॥

स्वाध्यायेन व्रतैर्होमैर्विद्येनेज्यया सुतैः ।

महायज्ञैश्च यज्ञैश्च ब्राह्मीयं क्रियते तनुः ॥ — Manu : II: 27-28.

Yājñavalkya also holds identical view.<sup>47</sup> Commentators like Mēdhātithi and Kullūka in their own way have sought to clarify those points. According to the former<sup>48</sup> the term ‘Enas’ in the verse of Manu (II. 27) strictly refers to impurity, while Kullūka explains that blemishes of seed are those arising out of intercourse in a prohibited manner and ‘Gārbhika’ blemish is what arises from having to stay in the womb of an impure mother.<sup>49</sup> The mitākṣara goes a step further to assert that Saṃskāras possess the power of removing bodily defects transmitted from parents (such as defective limbs, diseased etc.) and are not intended to remove the taint of being born of sinful parents.<sup>50</sup> The purificatory nature of the Saṃskāras is clear from the statement of Manu, who says that all the Saṃskāras are performed on a woman also for the purification of the body.<sup>51</sup> The Saṃskāratattva quotes on opinion of Hārīta which offers details regarding the modes of purification of particular rites (Saṃskāras). Thus when a person has intercourse according to the procedure of Garbhādhāna he establishes in the wife a foetus that becomes fit for the reception of the Vēda, by the rite of Puṃsavana he makes the garbha become a male, by the ceremony of

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47 एवमेनः शमं याति बीजकर्मसमुद्भवम् ।

तूष्णीमेताः क्रियाः स्त्रीणां विवाहस्तु समन्वकः ॥

Yājñ. Smṛ.: I-13.

48 एनः पापमदृष्टं दुःखकारणं तस्य बीजगर्भयोर्निमित्तभावादशौचित्वमात्रमिहोच्यते ।

49 बैजिकं प्रतिषिद्धमैथुनसंकल्पादिना च पैतृक्रेतो दोषाद्यद्यत्पापं गार्भिकं चाशुचिमातृगर्भवासजं ।

50 बिजगर्भसमुद्भवं शुक्रशोणितसंबद्धं गात्रव्याधि संक्रान्तिनिमित्तं वा न तु पतितोत्पन्नत्वादि ।

Mit. on Yāj. 1.3.

51 अमन्त्रिका तु कार्येयं स्त्रीणामावृदशेषतः ।

संस्कारार्थं शरीरस्य यथाकालं यथाक्रमम् ॥

Manu: II-66.

Sīmantōnnayana he removes from the foetus the taint derived from the parents and the accumulated taints (which are five) due to seed, blood and womb are removed by Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Annaprāśana, Cūḍākaraṇa and Samāvartana. By observance of these eight Saṃskāras purity arises.<sup>52</sup> To add sacredness and spirituality to these sacraments, it was held that observances of some of them upgrade men to the status of the sages, while others are sufficient to upgrade them to the level of the gods. Hāritā has got definite views in this respect.<sup>53</sup>

So Saṃskāras are purificatory acts, making both body and mind pure and thereby helping one in spiritual upliftment. Dr. R. B. Pandey makes the position clear in the following lines: 'It means religious purificatory rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and intellect of an individual so that he may become a fullfledged member of the community. But the Hindu Saṃskāras also combine a number of preliminary considerations and rites and other accompanying regulations and observances, all aiming at not only the formal purifications of the body but at sanctifying, impressing, refining and perfecting the entire individuality of the recipient.' The Saṃskāras with their

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52 तत्र हारीतः - गर्भाधानवदुपेतो ब्राह्मगर्भं समधाति । पुंसवनात्पुंसीकरोति । फलस्थापनान्मातापितृजं पाप्मानमपोहति ।  
रेतोरक्तगर्भोपघातः पञ्चगुणो जातकर्मणा प्रथममपोहति । नामकरणेन द्वितीयं प्राशनेन तृतीयं चूडाकरणेन चतुर्थं स्नापनेन  
पञ्चममेतैरष्टभिः संस्कारैः गर्भोपघातात् पूतो भवति ॥

Saṃskāra Tattva: P. 857.

53 गर्भाधानादिस्मार्तो ब्राह्मः । पाकयज्ञहविर्यज्ञसौम्याश्चेति दैवः । ब्रह्मसंस्कारसंस्कृतः ऋषीणां समाततां सलोकतां सायुज्यं  
गच्छति । दैवेनोत्तरेण संस्कृतो देवानां समानतां सलोकतां सायुज्यं गच्छति इति ।

Smṛticandrikā I. P.13; Saṃskāra Prakāśa: P. 135.

paraphernalia were regarded as producing a peculiar indefinable kind of merit for the man who underwent them - 'आत्मशरीरान्यतरनिष्ठः विहितक्रियाजन्योतिशयविशेषः संस्कारः' (Vīra. mit. sam. vol. I. p. 132)<sup>54</sup>

Mm. Dr. P. V. Kane has identically explained the purpose and utility of Saṃskāras in the following lines: 'The exact significance of Saṃskāras in the development of higher human personality was left rather vague in our authorities and their treatment of the purpose of Saṃskāras is not very elaborate or exhaustive. The Saṃskāras had been treated from very ancient times as necessary for unfolding the latent capacities of man for development and as being the outward symbols or signs of the inner change which would fit human beings for corporate life and they also tended to confer a certain status on those who underwent them. If we look at the list of Saṃskāras we shall find that the purposes of Saṃskāras were manifold. Some like Upanayana served spiritual and cultural purposes. they brought the unredeemed person into the company of the elect, they opened the door to Vedic study and thus conferred special privileges and exacted duties. They also have psychological values impressing on the mind of the person that he has assumed a new role and must strive to observe its rules. Other Saṃskāras like Nāmakaraṇa, Annaprāśana, Niṣkramaṇa were more or less of a popular nature. They afforded opportunities for the expression of love and affection and for festivities. Other Saṃskāras like Garbhādhāna,

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54 Note here also the words of Mēdātīthi on Manu II 27. संस्काराश्च सर्वः संस्कार्ये कार्यान्तरशेषभूते कृतार्थे करिष्यमाणार्थे वा कञ्चिद्विशेषमादधाति व्रीहीनवहन्तीति ।



Puṃsavana, Sīmantōnnayana also had mystical and symbolical elements. Vivāha was a sacrament which brought about a union of two personalities into one for the purpose of continuance of society and for the uplift of the two by self-restraint, by self-sacrifice and mutual co-operation.<sup>55</sup>

It would at this stage worthwhile to trace the exact meaning of the word as may be gathered from the derivation. Any attempt to translate the word 'Saṃskāra' correctly into English will be simply inaccurate. It should not mean 'mere outward religious rite, Polite observances, empty form, stately urge, formalities and punctitious behaviour,<sup>56</sup> nor should it be used in the sense of rites and rituals alone by which we understand 'form of procedure, actions required or usual in a religious or solemn ceremony or observance or a body of usages characteristic of a church.'<sup>57</sup>

A better approach to the rendering of 'Saṃskāra' in English is made by the word 'Sacrament' which means 'religious ceremony or act regarded as outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace' applied by the Eastern pre-reformation western and Roman catholic churches to the seven rites of baptism, confirmation, the encharist, penance, extreme unction, orders and matrimony. Sacrament also means confirmation of some promise or oath, things of mysterious significance, sacred influence and symbol. Thus it

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55 History of Dharamaśāstra, Vol. II, Part I, Pp. 192-193.

56 Oxford Dictionary, under the word 'Ceremony'.

57 Oxford Dictionary, under the word 'Rite'.

overlaps many other religious spheres which in sanskrit literature are covered by 'śuddhi', purification, prāyaścitta, atonement, vratas, vow etc.'

A glance at the Vedic literature, where the term 'Saṃskāra' occurs will show that meaning of purification was associated with the word in that remote age. It is clear that the word is derived from the root 'Kṛ', with prefix 'saṃ' and the suffix 'ghañ', we find the word used as adjective conveying the sense of 'purified'.<sup>58</sup> We get there other words connected with it as Saṃskṛtatra,<sup>59</sup> 'रणाय संस्कृतः'.<sup>60</sup> In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa<sup>61</sup> the idea of purification is established in a more clear way. In the same text we find the word used as adjective.<sup>62</sup> The sense of purification is clear in the Chāndōgya Upaniṣad.<sup>63</sup>

In the sūtras of Jaimini the term has been used several times<sup>64</sup> in the sense of purificatory act in a sacrifice. Sometimes, as in III. 8. 3 the word has been applied to the actions of shaving the head, washing the teeth and paring the nails on the part of the sacrificer in the Jyōtiṣōma,<sup>65</sup> while at other places the term has been used with reference

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58 R.V. V. 76-2.

59 R.V. VI 28.4.

60 R.V. VIII, 33.9.

61 स इदं देवेभ्यो हविः संस्कुरु । S.B. 1.1.4. 10.

62 तस्मादु खी पुमांससं संस्कृते तिष्ठन्तमभ्येति । - S.B. III. 2.1.22. For similar use vide Vāj. S. IV. 34.

63 IV. 16.2.... मनसा संस्करोति ब्रह्मा वाचा होता ।

64 स्विष्टकृद्भुभयसंस्कारेषु वादरिः । III. 5.15.

द्रव्यगुणसंस्कारेषु वादरिः । III 1.3.

III 8.3., IX 2.9.42.44; IX 3.25. X 4.33. IX 4.50.54. X 1.2 and 11.

65 संस्कारस्तु पुरुषसामर्थ्ये यथावेदं कर्मवदव्यवतिष्ठेरन् । III 8.3.

to prōkṣaṇa (sprinkling of water).<sup>66</sup> In X - 2-49 the word has been applied to such acts as shaving of the head and face.<sup>67</sup> The sūtra VI-1-35<sup>68</sup> has the word 'Samskāras' referring to Upanayana. Thus the purificatory aspect of Samskāras is as old as the Vedic literature and in the Mimāṃsa sūtras, as we have already observed the word distinctly has been used with reference to such acts which have a purificatory character.

In this connection reference may be made to the various senses in which the term is found to be used in different Śāstras.

The Vācaspatyābhidhāna explains it to mean by it the religious purification of sacrificial materials.<sup>69</sup> The Vēdāntists regard it as purification arising out of bath etc.<sup>70</sup> The Naiyāyikas use it in the sense of 'self productive quality or faculty of impression recognised by the vaiśeṣikas as one of the twenty four guṇas.' In sanskrit literature the sense of the word has been widened to convey the following, namely, education, cultivation.

66 तादर्थ्याद्वा तदाख्या स्यात् संस्कारैरविशिष्टत्वात् ।

— IX. 3.25.

Śabara's Commentary : तादर्थ्यात् तादर्थ्यम् ब्रीह्यर्थता नीवारणाम्, ये ब्रीहिप्रोक्षणादयः संस्काराः क्रियन्ते ।

67 यदि तु वचनात्तेषां जपसंस्कारमर्थलुप्तं सेष्टि तदर्थत्वात् । X. 2.49.

Śabara's Commentary संस्काराः केशश्मश्रु वपति इत्येवमादयः ।

68 संस्कारस्य तदर्थत्वात् विद्यायां पुरुषश्रुतिः ॥ VI. 1.35.

Śabara's Commentary - उपनयनस्य संस्कारस्य तदर्थत्वात् ।

69 प्रोक्षणादिजन्यसंस्कारो यज्ञाङ्गपुरोडाशेष्विति द्रव्यधर्मः । V. P. 5185.

70 स्नानाचमनादिजन्याः संस्काराः देहे उत्पद्यमानाणि तदभिमानि जीवे कल्पन्ते ।

Ibid. P. 5158.

training,<sup>71</sup> perfection and grammatical correctness,<sup>72</sup> making perfect, refining, reorienting,<sup>73</sup> embellishment, decoration and ornamentation;<sup>74</sup> the faculty of recollection, impression on the memory,<sup>75</sup> impression,<sup>76</sup> a purificatory rite, a religious, rite or ceremony,<sup>77</sup> merit of action etc.<sup>78</sup>

In these cases the purificatory aspect of the word is distinctly noticed. Other meanings like decoration, ornamentation etc. are closely allied to the concept of purification.

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71 निसर्गसंस्कारविनीत इत्यसौ ।

नृपेण चक्रे युवराजशब्दभाक् ॥

Raghuvamśa III. 35.

72 संस्कारवत्पेव गिरा मनीषी ।

तया स पूतश्च विभूषितश्च ॥

Kumāra. I. 28.

73 प्रयुक्तसंस्कार इवाधिकं बभौ ॥

Raghu: III-18.

74 स्वभावसुन्दरं वस्तु न संस्कारमपेक्षते ॥

Śākuntala : VII. 23.

75 संस्कारजन्यं ज्ञानं स्मृतिः ।

Tarkasaṅgraha.

76 यन्नवे भाजने लग्नः संस्कारो नान्यथा भवेत् ।

Hitopadēśa I. 8.

77 कार्यः शरीरसंस्कारः पावनः प्रेत्यचेह च ।

Manu: II - 26.

78 फलानुमेयाः प्रारम्भाः संस्काराः प्राक्तना इव ।

Raghu: I. 20. !

### A. SAMSKĀRAS - AND THEIR PURPOSES

As already indicated, it is strictly not an easy job to trace exactly the purpose that initiated the origin of the Samskāras. As in the Vedic age of hoary past we find existence of society in its full-fledged form, with rites and ceremonies, the Samskāras were also observed in that remote age. But the history of the exact origin of Samskāra in that period is shrouded in mystery. Whatever that may be, in subsequent ages we have noticed that Samskāras have played a vital role in the life of an individual. These Samskāras were not performed with reference to a particular period of his life but it was to be associated with him since conception and lasting up to his death. !79 It is for this reason that in some of the Gṛhya sūtras, Antyēṣṭi is also regarded as a Samskāra. From the observation of Manu it appears that as a result of the Samskāras perpetrated with incantations, one attains the specific right of the performance of deeds according to the Dharmaśāstras. !80

The principal purpose of Samskāra was reorientation or purification of the body of an individual. It has already been stated that in the society an idea gained ground that as a body is created out of blood and semen in a mysterious way it is impure and some processes are to be followed before it could be fit for any religious act. Thus Manu lays

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79 ब्रह्मक्षत्रियविदूषूद्रा वर्णास्त्वाद्यास्त्रयो द्विजाः ।

निषेकाद्याः श्मशानान्तास्तेषां वै मन्त्रतः क्रियाः ॥

Yāj. Smṛ. I-10.

80 निषेकादिश्मशानान्तो मन्त्रौर्यस्योदितो विधिः ।

तस्य शास्त्रेऽधिकारोऽस्मिञ्ज्ञेयो नान्यस्य कस्यचित् ॥

Manu: II-16.

stress on the purificatory element of Saṃskāras with reference to the body.<sup>81</sup> Kullūka Bhatta makes the position clear.<sup>82</sup> The purification is not only for this world but also for the world hereafter as the words ‘पावानः प्रेत्य चेह च’ in Manu’s verse shows.<sup>83</sup> Manu has elaborated further as to how the question of sin may crop up, the removal of which is aimed at by the observation of the Saṃskāras. Thus according to him these sins or impurities may originate out of impurities in seed and foetus and so far as the twiceborn castes are concerned these are removed by way of the observances of Saṃskāras like Jātakarma, Cūḍākarāṇa, Mauñjibandhana etc.<sup>84</sup> Here Kulluka’s explanatory text deserves attention.<sup>85</sup> Manu goes a step further and declares that these Saṃskāras may lead the body to the attainment of union with the supreme self. What Manu actually intends to stress here perhaps is this that observances of these rites cast a spiritual spell on one’s mind and

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81 वैदिकैः कर्मभिः पुण्यैर्निषेकादिर्द्विजन्मनाम् ।

कार्यः शरीरसंस्कारः पावनः प्रेत्य चेह च ॥

Manu: II-26.

82 वेदमूलत्वाद्वैदिकैः पुण्यैः शुभैर्मन्त्रयोगादिकर्मभिर्द्विजातीनां गर्भाधानादिशरीरसंस्कारः कर्तव्यः ।

83 (a) पावनः पापक्षयहेतुः । प्रेत्य परलोके संस्कृतस्य यागादिफलसंबन्धात्, इह लोके च वेदाध्ययनाद्यधिकारात् ।

Kulluka’s Commentary on Manu: II -26.

(b) प्रेत्य चेह चेत्यनेन संस्कृतस्य दृष्टादृष्टफलेषु कारीरिज्योतिष्टोमादि कर्मसु अधिकारादुभयलोकोपकारकत्वं संस्काराणामुक्तम् ॥ Vīra. Sam. P. 133.

84 गर्भैर्होमैर्जातकर्मचौडमौञ्जीनिबन्धनैः ।

Manu -27.

एवमेतः शमं याति बीजगर्भसमुद्भवम् ॥

Yājñ. Smṛ. I.13.

85 एतैर्बौजिकं प्रतिषिद्धमैथुनसंकल्पादिना च पैतृकरोतोदोषाद्यद्यत्पापं गार्भिकं चाशुचिमातृगर्भवासजं तद्विजातीनामपमृज्यते ॥ Kulluka’s Commentary on Manu II.27.

constant idea of purification which is inevitably associated with the rites makes one feel that really one is being upgraded by these acts. Once such an idea gets developed he feels an urge to observe them in the right manner. Whatever may be the other consequences visible or invisible, it is clear that these observances help to develop a mental make up which ultimately helps one, to the attainment of final liberation, namely, mōkṣa.<sup>86</sup>

Its importance was so much over estimated that non-observance of the Saṃskāras was regarded strictly as social offence and it was penalised by social boycott. Thus on the question of a Dvijāti not undergoing the Saṃskāra of Upanayana in time (Vide Manu II. 38), he was censured as a down-cast and fallen one and unless expiations in the proper manner was gone through no social and matrimonial relationship could be established with him.<sup>87</sup>

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86 स्वाध्यायेन व्रतैर्होमैश्चैविचेनेज्यया सुतैः ।

महायज्ञैश्च यज्ञैश्च ब्रह्मीयं कियते तनुः ॥

Manu: II-28.

Also Kulluka's observations:

ब्राह्मी ब्रह्मप्राप्तिर्योग्येयं तनुः तन्ववच्छिन्न आत्मा कियते । कर्मसहकृतब्रह्मज्ञानेन मोक्षावाप्तेः ।

On Manu II. 28.

न हि कर्मभिरेव केवलैः ब्रह्मत्वप्राप्तिः परिज्ञानकर्म समुच्चयात् किल मोक्षः । एतैस्तु संस्कृतः आत्मोपासनास्वधिक्रियते ॥

Mēdhātithi on Manu II-28.

87 Vide Manu: II-39.

नैतैरपूतैर्विधिवदाप्यपि हि कर्हिचित् ।

ब्राह्मण्यौनांश्च संबन्धान्नाचरेद्ब्राह्मणैः सह ॥

Manu: II - 40.

Even in case of those for whom uttering Vēdic incantations was prohibited, namely the ladies and the Śūdras,<sup>88</sup> observance of these Saṃskāras was prescribed to be made without mantras.<sup>89</sup> Some of the writers on law have gone so far as to declare that on birth even a Brāhmaṇa is like a Śūdra (i.e.: like a Śūdra one is allowed to move about and behave in an unrestricted way. Vide Gautama's rule: 'प्रागुपनयनात् कामचारकामवादकामभक्षः' G. D. S. 1. 2. 1) and through the Saṃskāras he is raised to the status of a Dvija.<sup>90</sup> This conception of Saṃskāra is definitely a later one, and is but a corollary of the principal purpose, namely purification. The value of Saṃskāras (at least of some of them) was so much over emphasised that observances of certain Saṃskāras were supposed to raise certain status of the person observing them.

Thus through the observance of the rite of Upanayana members of the three castes, namely Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya attained certain special social privileges and rights. Upanayana was regarded as a passport for admission into the Āryan community and its

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88 अमन्त्रिका तु कार्येयं स्त्रीणामवृद्धशेषतः ।

संस्कारार्थं शरीरस्य यथाकालं यथाक्रमम् ॥

Manu: II-66.

तूष्णीमेताः क्रियाः स्त्रीणां विवाहस्तु समन्वकः ॥

Yājñ. Smr.: II-13.

89 शूद्रोऽप्येवं विधः कार्यो विनामन्त्रेण संस्कृतः ॥

Yama (quoted in the mitākṣara on Yājñ. Smr. I-10.

90 जन्मना जायते शूद्रः संस्कारादद्विज उच्यते ॥



sacred literatures, namely the Vēdas, and was regarded as the new birth, the second birth.<sup>91</sup> and was of course not allowed for all, namely the Śūdra<sup>92</sup> (and women, though some of the writers on law have permitted Upanayana of them). Similarly Samāvartana and Vivāha conferred on the person observing them the status of performing all kinds of sacrifice, befitting an Āryan, as a member of the Gārhashtya Āśrama. This aspect of purification and attainment of status which the Saṃskāras are supposed to confer on persons, have been explicitly expressed by Āṅgirā<sup>93</sup> For the importance of the Saṃskāras Āṅgira has prescribed them to be indispensable for all members of the caste in the society, specially for the Brāhmins.<sup>94</sup> Mitramiśra makes the point clear.<sup>95</sup>

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91 .....द्विजातीनामौपनायनिको विधिः ।

उत्पत्तिव्यञ्जकः पुण्यः ।

Manu: II-68.

92 अशूद्राणामदुष्टकर्मणामुपनयनम् ।

Āpas. Dha. Sū. 1.1.16.

93 पञ्चविंशतिसंस्कारैः संस्कृता ये द्विजातयः ।

ते पवित्राश्च योग्याः स्युः श्रद्धादिषु सुमन्विताः ॥

Quoted in Vīr. Sam. P. 135 (Chowkhamba Sans. Series)

94 संस्कारा नियता ह्येते ब्राह्मणस्य विशेषतः ॥

Quoted in the Vīr. Sam. P. 136.

95 एते च संस्काराः सर्ववर्णानामैहिकामुष्मिकफलानुकूलत्वेनावश्यकाः । ब्राह्मणानान्तु ब्राह्मणाभिव्यञ्जकत्वेन विशेषतः ।

Vīr. Sam. P. 136.

अतः परं द्विजातीनां संस्कृतिर्नियतोच्यते ।

संस्काररहिता ये तु तेषां जन्मनिरर्थकम् ॥

Āśvalāyana quoted in Saṃskāraratnamāla, P. 4.

स्वे स्वे गृह्ये यथाप्रोक्तास्तथा संस्कृतयोखिलाः ।

कर्तव्या भूतिकामेन नाऽन्यथा सिद्धिमृच्छति ॥

Sam. Rat. P. 4.

Mitramiśra by way of defining Saṃskāra as - 'आत्मशरीरान्यतरनिष्ठो विहितक्रियाजन्योऽतिशय विशेषः' and classifying it under two categories (स च द्विविधः Vīr. Sam. P. 132) clearly presents before us an idea about the two-fold purposes of the Saṃskāras. Some like Upanayana are meant for conferring status in the study of the Vēdas, while others like Jātakarma etc.<sup>96</sup> are intended to remove the offences and sins accrued. It is in this sense that Śāṅkara's line, as perviously mentioned (on Vēdānta Sūtra 1. 1. 4) finds full justification. The two-fold classification of Saṃskāras as Brāhma and Daiva, made by Hārīta does not lead us to determine the purpose of the Saṃskāras, except that it helps us to understand that aspect of Saṃskāra, which confers certain merit or status on performance. This is what has been referred to by Tantravārtika (on Jai. III 8. 9 - already mentioned before) as 'गुणान्तरोपजनन' (accruing merit). Thus Hārīta observes that the rites like Garbhādhāna etc. are Brāhma, while those like Pākayajña etc. are Daiva.<sup>97</sup> He adds further that one through the observance of Brāhma Saṃskāras becomes equated with the sages and seers and of Daiva Saṃskāras gets identical abode of the gods.<sup>98</sup> This idea has its support from Śāṅkalikhita<sup>99</sup>

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96 एकस्तावत्कर्मान्तराधिकारेऽनुकूलः यथोऽपनयनजन्यो वेदाध्ययनाद्यधिकारापादकः । अपरस्तूत्यन्नदुरितमात्र नाशको यथा बीजगर्भसमुद्भवैरनोनिर्बहणो जातकर्मादिजन्यः ॥

Vīr. Sam. P. 132.

97 द्विविधो हि संस्कारो भवति ब्राह्मो दैवश्च । गर्भाधानादि स्मार्तो ब्राह्मः । पाकयज्ञहविर्यज्ञसौम्याश्च दैवा इति ।

Quoted in Vīr. Sam. P. 135.

98 ब्राह्मसंस्कारसंस्कृतः ऋषीणां समानतां सलोकतां सायुज्यं गच्छति । दैवेनोत्तरेण संस्कृतो देवानां समानतां सलोकतां सायुज्यं गच्छति इति ।

Vīr. Sam. Pp. 139-140.

In the Saṃskāra Ratnamāla of Bhatta Gōpīnātha Dīkshitha the Saṃskāras have been classified under different heads as Naimittika, Vārṣika, Māsika etc. and it has been stated there that those like Pañca Mahāyajñās are to be treated as compulsory daily duty like one's muttering of prayers.<sup>100</sup> The idea behind the observance of Pañca Mahāyajña is love, compassion, gratitude, indebtedness etc. to all beings. When such Saṃskāras are described as Nitya (obligatory) for daily performance, this enlightens us on an important aspect of the purpose of the Saṃskāras. This was the moral aspect. Gautama makes mention of the eight good qualities of soul, namely, mercy, forbearance, freedom from envy, purity, calmness, right behaviour and freedom from greed and covetousness.<sup>101</sup> He adds further that one going through the Saṃskāras and the Ātma-guṇas attains communion with

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99 पाकयज्ञा हविर्यज्ञाः सोमसंस्थास्तथैव च ।  
 संस्कारा ह्यग्निहोत्रान्ता अग्निहोत्रं तु जुह्वतः ॥  
 संस्कारैः संस्कृतः पूर्वैरुत्तरैरनुसंस्कृतः ।  
 नित्यमष्टगुणैर्युक्तो ब्राह्मणो ब्राह्मणलौकिकः ॥  
 ब्राह्मं पदमवाप्नोति यस्मान्न च्यवते पुनः ।  
 नाकपृष्ठं यशो धर्मं त्रिरीजानन्निविष्टपम् ॥

Quoted in Vīr. Sam. P. 140.

100 नैमित्तिकः षोडशोक्तः समुद्राहावसानकाः ।  
 सप्तैवाग्नयणाद्याश्च संस्कारा वार्षिका मताः ॥  
 मासिकं पार्वणं प्रोक्तमशक्तानां तु वार्षिकम् ।  
 महायज्ञाश्च नित्यास्युः सन्ध्यावच्चाग्निहोत्रवत् ॥

P. 4.

101 अष्टावात्मगुणाः - दया सर्वभूतेषु क्षान्तिरनसूयता शौचमनायासो माङ्गल्यमकार्पण्यमस्पृहेति ।

G.D.S. VIII - 24.

Brahman.<sup>102</sup> Whatever may be the spiritual value of such statement of the Śāstras, it is clear that by constant practice of these qualities of forbearance, purity, non-covetousness etc. one attains gradual excellence from ethical point of view and this helps to a great extent in the attainment of communion with the supreme self.

By way of Arthavāda the significance and purpose of some of the Saṃskāras have been described by Bhatta Gōpīnātha in his Saṃskāra Ratnamāla. Thus according to him by the performance of the rite known as Garbhādhāna the womb is made purified; by puṃsavana a male child is born. Sīmantōnnayana has got identical result with Garbhādhāna. By Jātakarma the impurity caused by staying at the foetus chamber is wiped off; by Nāmakaraṇa comes longevity of the child; by Annaprāśana impurity of a foetus life is gone; by Cūḍākaraṇa come strength, longevity and spirit; by Upanayana comes the right of the study of the Vēdas of twice born caste and by marriage one becomes free from the debt towards gods and manes.<sup>103</sup> From the above mentioned remark of Bhatta Gōpīnātha

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102 यस्यैते चतुर्विंशत्संस्कारा अष्टावात्मगुणाश्च स ब्रह्मणः सायुज्यमाप्नोति ।

G.D.S. VIII - 25.

103 निषेकाद्वैजिकं चैनो गार्भिकं चापमृज्यते ।  
 क्षेत्रसंस्कारसिद्धिश्च गर्भाधानफलं स्मृतम् ॥  
 गर्भे भवे च पुंसूतेः पुंस्त्वस्य प्रतिपादनं ।  
 निषेकफलवज्जेयं फलं सीमन्तकर्मणः ॥  
 गर्भाम्बुपानजो दोषो जातात्सर्वोऽपि नश्यति ।  
 आयुर्वर्चोऽभिवृद्धिश्च सिद्धिर्व्यवहृतेस्तथा ॥  
 नामकर्मफलं त्वेतत्समुद्दिष्टं मनीषिभिः ।  
 निष्क्रमादायुश्चैवृद्धिरप्युद्दिष्टा मनीषिभिः ॥

we may easily guess that though most of the minor Saṃskāras have lost their purpose in modern days, yet apart from the principal purificatory purpose, each had certain specific purposes. These are strictly spiritual in nature.

The very fact that superstitious beliefs in the existence of superhuman demoniac influences on the society and their evil doing capacity, existed in society since immemorial days, helps us to trace some of the purposes of the Saṃskāras. Thus these superstitious ideas along with the conception of sin were to a certain extent responsible for origination of the Saṃskāras. I have hinted at this phenomenon in the introductory part of this thesis. In some of the Saṃskāras we notice that the evil spirits are being propitiated in a very modest manner. The demoniac beings are often worshipped and eulogised so that they may remain satisfied and do not in any way cause injury to the individual concerned. Thus since the time of conception right upto the birth of the baby, householder took all precautionary steps to guard the womb and the baby-to-be-born against all evil influences. In the Pāraskara Gr̥hya Sūtra provision has been made for the propitiation of gods for the protection of the child.<sup>104</sup> When however such eulogies and propitiation proved to be of

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अन्नाशनान्मातृगर्भमलाशादपि शुध्यति ।  
 बलायुर्वचो वृद्धिश्च चूडाकर्मफलं स्मृतं ॥  
 उपनीतेः फलत्वेतत् द्विजता सिद्धिपूर्विका ।  
 वेदाधीत्यधिकारस्य सिद्धिर्ऋषिभिरिता ॥  
 देवपित्रार्णापगमो विवाहस्य फलं स्मृतम् ।  
 संस्कार रहिता ये तु तेषां जन्म निरर्थकम् ॥

Saṃskāra Ratnamāla, P. 6.

no positive use. Certain precautionary and preventive steps were arranged. They were in the form of challenge to these evil spirits. These spirits were directly asked to quit those places. The following note of warning is served on the spirits: 'Let Śuṇḍa, Māraka, Upavīra, Śauṇḍikēya, Ulūkhala, Malimluca, Droṇāśa and Cyavana vanish from this place.<sup>105</sup> When these two methods did prove unsuccessful invocation to the deities were made so that they might come forward to drive these unwanted devilish elements. Prayer thus has been noticed to be made to Agni on the fourth day after marriage so that he may rescue the newly married bride from evil influences. Similar requests were made to the powerful deities like Vāyu, Sūrya etc.<sup>106</sup> Where however these two methods failed recourse was taken to some unfair methods, the method of deception, as we may rightly call it. In the Kauśika Sūtra a rite has been referred to where before the actual death of the person, an image of that person concerned was used to be burnt.<sup>107</sup> The idea behind such a peculiar act seemed to have been the creation of disillusion in the mind of the God of death, who

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104 यदि कुमार उपद्रवेज्जालेन प्रच्छद्योत्तरीयेण वा पिताऽङ्क आधाय जपति कुर्कुरः सुकूर्कुरः कूर्कुरो बालबन्धनः । चेष्टेच्छुनक सृज नमस्ते अस्तु सीसरो लपेतापह्वर तत्सत्यम् ।

P. G. Sū. 1-16-24.

105 द्वारदेशे सूतिकाग्निमुपसमाधायोत्थानात्संधिक्लेशयोः फलीकरणमिश्रान्त्सर्षपानग्रावावपति । शण्डामर्का उपवीरः शौण्डिकेय उलूखलः । मलिमुचो द्रोणासश्च्यवनो नश्यतादितः स्वाहा ॥

P.G.S. 1-16-23.

106 अग्ने प्रायश्चित्ते त्वं देवानां प्रायश्चित्तिरसि ब्रह्मणस्त्वा नाथकाम उपधावामि याऽस्यै पतिघ्नी तनूस्तामस्यै नाशय स्वाहा ॥

P.G.S. 1-11-2.

वायो.....प्राजाप्ती.....स्वाहा ॥ P.G.S. 1-11.2.

सूर्य.....पशुघ्नी.....स्वाहा ॥ P.G.S. 1-11-2.

107 K.S. XI-48. 54ff. 39ff.

instead of haunting the proper body may be supposed to mistake the image as the real one and take it. These are very interesting cases in the social history of a country and this indicates that if properly traced, each rite or Saṃskāra has behind it long history of evolution.

Sometimes we notice that magical acts were perpetrated to repulse any evil designs of the demons. Thus at the time of tonsure, Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra observes that the severed hair should be mixed with cowdung and buried in a cowstall or thrown into a river.<sup>108</sup> It is noticed that water is an essential element in all religious acts. It is also supposed to have certain spiritual and magical significance. Water has been described in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa as possessing the potentialities of warding off satanic influence.<sup>109</sup> In the burial ceremony certain formalities are observed which indicate that the purpose is to scarce away the spirits, who may come over to take possession of the body. The stick (Daṇḍa) that was used by the Brahmacārin and which was advised to be maintained, was intended perhaps for protection against all elements worldly and spiritual. The direction of Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra is a pointer to this fact.<sup>110</sup> In this category should fall the rites like combing the

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108 अनुगुप्तमेतं सकेशं गोमयपिण्डं निधाय गोष्ठे पल्लव उदकान्ते वाऽचार्याय वरं ददाति ।

P.G.S. 2-1; 2-3.

109 आपो हि वै रक्षोघ्नी ।

S. Brāhmaṇa.

110 विश्वाभ्यो मा नाष्ट्राभ्यस्परिपाहि सर्वत इति ।

P.G.S. II- 6-26.

cf. वेणुरसि वानस्पत्योऽसि सर्वतो मा पाहि इति वैणवं दण्डम् ।

Ās. 3-8-15.

hair at the time of Sīmantōnnayana.<sup>111</sup> The changing of the marriage-costume of the bride was a very interesting formality, for by such act, the evil influence on the bride was supposed to be transferred to the Brāhmaṇa (to whom the dresses were given), who was thought of too powerful to be influenced by the evilmakers.<sup>112</sup>

In all the cases, as we have already noticed the purpose of certain Saṃskāras is either appeasement or averting of the unholy evil influences.

Side by side with these we find certain other ceremonies, the purpose of which is to attract the attention of powers having favourable influences. It was a common belief that each moment in the life of a Hindu is being presided over by deities. So to attract the favourable influences of those deities, they were invoked at most of the Saṃskāras. Thus in the rite of Garbhādhāna (conception) blessings are sought from Viṣṇu,<sup>113</sup> who is regarded as the presiding deity, while in the rite of marriage (Vivāha), it is sought from the Prajāpati, and in the rite of Upanayana, from Bṛhaspati. As in the case of resistance of evil influences, here also (i.e.: in case of bringing good influences in favour) magical

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111 Ā.G.S. XIV.; H.G.S. II-2.

112 A.V. XIV. 2, 48-50; K.S. 76-1; 79-24.

113 Here the incantation addressed to Viṣṇu is:

विष्णुर्योनि कल्पयतु त्वष्टा रूपाणि पिशतु ।

असिचतु प्रजापतिर्धाता गर्भं दद्यातु ते ॥

Mantrabrāhmaṇa, 1-4.6.

Vide Gōbhila 2-5.9; Khā. Gr. Sū. 1.4.15.



element played a vital role. Thus in the Sīmantōnnayana rite the branch of the Udumbara tree was applied to the neck of the wife.<sup>114</sup> This was believed to bring fertility. Almost similar was the prescription for mounting on a slab of stone which was prescribed both in the Upanayana<sup>115</sup> and Vivāha<sup>116</sup> rites. Such an act was intended for bringing about firmness and the idea arose definitely out of the qualities of stones, which are firm and hard. Again touching of the heart, whether in case of the teacher and the student or in the case of the husband and wife, was regarded as a sure means of bringing about union and harmony. The expectant mother was made to eat barley corn with two leaves and curd attached to it.<sup>117</sup> The reason is obvious. The things which the expectant mother took were symbolical of the male sex and were expected to impart it to the embryo. Again we notice that to produce off-springs, the juice of a many-rooted and luxuriant banyan tree branch was inserted into the right nostril of the wife.<sup>118</sup> We notice that in some cases anointment was regarded as possessing the capacity of producing love and affection. In the marriage ceremonies the father of the bride has been directed to anoint the couple and what the bridegroom uttered in that connection carries the special significance of such act of anointment.<sup>119</sup>

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114 औदुम्बरेण त्रिवृतमाबध्नाति । अयमूर्जवितो वृक्षः.....

— P.G.S. 1.15.4.6; G.G.S. II. 7.1.

115 Vide Āpa. Gr. Sū.: 10-4-9.

116 इममश्मानमारोहाश्मेव त्वं स्थिरा भव ।

— मन्त्रब्राह्मणम् 1.2.1.; Āś. Gr. Sū.: 1.7.7.

117 H.G.S. II, 2.23; Ā. Gr. Sū.: 1.13.2.

118 P.G.S. 1.14.3.

As already discussed before, the Saṃskāras had the purificatory effect and this aspect has sometimes resulted in such a condition that it has been instructed for a person to avoid evil, inauspicious and ugly sights and to be far from any contact with objects and persons regarded as impure. A snātaka, for instance, has been forbidden even to pronounce a word beginning with an unlucky letter or containing a repugnant idea.<sup>120</sup>

Apart from all the superstitious motives and magical elements, behind the Saṃskāras, one may easily trace certain amount of materialistic outlook in them. The Saṃskāras were intended for those who belonged to the Gārhasthya or household stage of life and it is quite natural that these persons were more or less of worldly spirit and as such whatever was regarded essential and desirable in worldly life, they wanted to have. They had a belief that the observance of the Saṃskāras could give them material comforts, long life, prosperity, cattle, progeny etc. In the special ceremony called Saptapadī, which is a part of the rite of Vivāha, the bride is made to walk seven steps, symbolising perhaps her joint entry into the second or household stage of life, and in all the steps, incantations are to be uttered to Viṣṇu so that he may give enough of food (Iṣe), strength (Ūrje), happiness (Māyōbhavya), cattle (Paśu), wealth (Rāyaspōṣa) etc.<sup>121</sup> Similarly in the ceremony of

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119 अथैषो समञ्जति समञ्जन्तु विश्वे देवाः समापो हृदयानि नौ । सम्मातरिश्वा सन्धाता समुदेष्ट्री दधातु नौ ॥

— P.G.S. I.4.15; G.G.S. II. 1.8.

120 गर्भिणी विजन्येति ब्रूयात् । सकुलमिति नकुलम् । भगालमिति कपालम् ।

P.G.S. II 10.11.12.

121 एकमिषे विष्णुस्त्वा नयतु ।

द्वे ऊर्जे विष्णुस्त्वा नयतु ।

Pāṇigrahaṇa, when the bride's hand is grasped by the groom, there is provision for six mantras to be uttered. In them are prayers to Indra so that he may bless the couple with ten male issues दशास्यां पुत्रानाधेहि - mantra Brāhmaṇa 1-2-18).

From what we have discussed so far it is clear that the purposes of the Saṃskāras being partly divine and partly secular, had their special significance in this that they are intended to regulate the life of a person in its moral and cultural aspect. Ultimately observance of the Saṃskāras makes a life pure and perfect. The beautiful analogy of the painting, which has already been mentioned, makes the point more clear by stating that just as different colours are mingled to contribute to the excellence of picture, similarly observance of different Saṃskāras in gradual degrees make a life perfect ethically and spiritually. If that is done the ideal is attained and more than that nothing may be hoped for. It is in this sense that Manu has categorically stated that by the observance of Saṃskāras, a body becomes fit for communion with the Supreme Self. (ब्राह्मीयं क्रियते तनुः ॥ Manu II-28)

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त्रीणि व्रताय विष्णुस्त्वा नयतु ।

चत्वारि मायोभव्याय विष्णुस्त्वा नयतु ।

पञ्च पशुभ्यो विष्णुस्त्वा नयतु ।

षड्रायस्पोषाय विष्णुस्त्वा नयतु ।

सप्त सप्तभ्यो होत्राभ्यो विष्णुस्त्वा नयतु ।

—Mantrabrāhmaṇam 1/2. 6.12.

## B. CONSTITUENTS OF SAMSKĀRA

While discussing about the purpose of the Samskāras we have observed that most of them are spiritual, while others are strictly secular. The mixture of common sense elements, secularism and spiritualism in the Samskāras have lent grace and gravity to the whole affair. The whole sacramental atmosphere was fragrant with spiritual significance. Under the sacramental canopy the recipient felt himself exalted, elevated and sanctified. There were definite reasons behind this spiritual outlook. Several elements and constituents mix together in a Samskāra to create this spiritual atmosphere. It will therefore be, in the fitness of things to attempt a short analytical note on the constituents of the Samskāras.

What is deemed as very much essential in almost all the Samskāras is the preservation of fire. The importance of Agni is reminiscent of the Vedic days, where the maximum number of hymns have been addressed to the 'Fire'. It is given there the appellation of 'Gṛhapati'<sup>122</sup> - (The Lord of the House). It was supposed to possess the potentiality of removing the diseases<sup>123</sup> and was a regular warder of enemies.<sup>124</sup> It was the mediator (Purōhita)<sup>125</sup> and messenger between the Gods in heaven and mortals on earth.<sup>126</sup> It was the director of rites अध्यक्षः धर्माणाम्<sup>127</sup> and therefore any rite done before fire was regarded

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122 In the Avesta it is called 'Atar' and conveys the idea of 'house lord of all houses';

Yasna, 17.11.

123 R.V. I-12.7.

124 R.V. VII.15.10.13.

125 R.V. I. 1.1.

126 R.V. X. 80.4.

127 R.V. VIII 43.24.

as very pure and effective. Writing on the usefulness and utility of fire in the Gāndharva marriage, Vātsyāyana has observed that any marriage perpetrated before fire is not revoked.<sup>128</sup> Therefore in marriage and Upanayana ceremonies specially invocations are addressed to the 'fire' more than once.<sup>129</sup> It may be mentioned in this connection that 'the Romans and the Greeks also made the hearth the centre of religious faith and rite'. The essential nature of Agni in all the rites has been stressed in the Saṃskāra Ratnamālā (pp. 58-59) which quotes from Pārijātha the names of fires in each Saṃskāra:

पावको लौकिकोह्यग्निः प्रथमः संप्रकीर्तितः ।

अग्निस्तु मरुतो नाम गर्भाधाने विधीयते ॥

ततः पुंसवने ज्ञेयः पवमानस्तथैव च ।

सीमन्ते मङ्गलो नाम प्रवलो जातकर्मणि ॥

नाग्री तु पार्थिवोह्यग्निः प्राशने तु शुचिस्मृतः ॥

(Vide also *Gṛhasṭha-ratnākara*: p. 94-110)

Next in importance comes water. Water like fire was regarded as strictly essential in all Saṃskāras and was used since the beginning right upto the end of the same. In our daily life we may easily feel the strictly secular, namely purificatory aspect of it. It possesses the natural capacity of cleansing the body off the impure elements. With one's body getting cleansed mind automatically becomes pure, they two being very closely

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128 अग्निसाक्षिका हि विवाहा न निवर्तन्ते ।

129 Judged from historical standpoint it may be stated while the Aryans passed through the extreme cold climate of the northern regions, they felt the friendly necessity of fire and it might have led them to deify it and in subsequent days it became conventionally an essential part of any religious act of a house holder.

associated and therefore it was likely that through gradual process the purificatory aspect of water was emphasised with it also got associated certain mystic idea that water being the first of the creator's creation<sup>130</sup> is definitely to be ascribed certain importance in all acts which have some bearing on religion. In certain waters are observed elements which have healing effects. This has gradually contributed to the idea that water has in it the potency to avert evils and demoniac influences.<sup>131</sup> The beneficent aspect of water has been explained in the following way - 'The animistic theory of the universe which underlies all ancient religion and philosophy suggested that water was a living being, which in so far as it assisted the process of growth and aided men in other ways, might be presumed to be beneficent.'<sup>132</sup> In the Saṃskāras, we will have occasion to observe that water was used normally in either of the ways, bath, sipping of water and sprinkling. The last two processes are but symbolical expressions of bath with special reference to Garbhādhāna, Jātakarma, Cūḍākarāṇa, Upanayana etc. water was utilised with a special significance. The incantations used along with the sprinkling of water for a Snātaka<sup>133</sup> and the bride<sup>134</sup> speak for the purpose of watering.

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130 आप एव ससर्जदौ तासु वीर्यमवासृजत् । Manu Smṛ. 1. 8.

131 आपो वै रक्षोघ्नी ॥

R.V. VII. 47.49; R.V. X-9.30. Cf. ऋतौ तु गर्भशङ्कित्वात्स्नानं मैथुनिनः स्मृतम् । Āpastamba, quoted by Gadādhara on P.G.S.

132 Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics Vol. II. P. 367. 'But besides this animistic theory, water seemed to living to ancient people on account of its mention, sound and power. That is why the Hebrew called it 'living water' - Hindu Saṃskāras, R.B. Pandey, P. 66.

133 तेन मामभिषिञ्चामि श्रियै यशासे ब्रह्मणे ब्रह्मवर्चसायेति ॥

P.G.S. II. 6.11.

Prayers and blessings are to be noticed in almost all the Saṃskāras. In the Vēdas we observe that prayers were addressed to the Gods for conferring material benefits to the sacrificer. The persons offering sacrifices were inspired more by secular motives than by spiritual designs. Saṃskāras are more or less domestic rites and therefore it is quite in the fitness of things that we will find some such prayers that relate to protections and prosperity of the family consisting of children, animals, corn, strength and other felicities. This will be evident as we go through the details of the rites in subsequent chapters. For special reference mention may be made of Upanayana (when a prayer for the the moral upliftment is made - G. G. S. II. 10. 35 etc). At the time of tying the girdle round the loin the student utters:

इयं दुरुक्तात्परिबाधमाना

शर्म वरूथं पुनतीन आगात् ।

प्राणापानाभ्यां बलमाभरती ।

प्रिया देवानां सुभगा मेखलेयम् ॥

- (P.G.S. II.2.11)

The meaning is 'Here has come to me, keeping away evil words purifying my mind as a purifier, clothing herself by (power of) inhalating and exhalation, with strength, this sisterly goddess, this blessed girdle.' Sometimes also blessings by one of the parties to the act was made and it was perhaps hoped that such a blessing would in future bring desired good effect:

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134 Ibid.: I. 8.5. (Vide Grh. Rat. Pp. 150-172.)

जरां गच्छ परिधत्स्व वासो भवाकृष्टीनामभिशस्ति पावा ।

शतं च जीव शरदः सुवर्चा रयिं च पुत्राननुसंख्यस्वायुष्मतीदं परिधत्स्व वासः ॥

- (P.G.S. I.4.13)

(Also note the blessings of a father to his son at the time of birth-rite: P. G. S. I. 16. 14; H. G. S. II. 3. 2.)

Not only prayers were constituents of Saṃskāras, the Gods were tried to be propitiated by means of sacrifice. Sacrifice therefore is almost an essential ingredient in the Saṃskāras.

The presiding deities were appeased by such sacrifice. These were in the form of homages or tributes to the beneficent gods in token of gratitude or in anticipation of further blessings.

In some of the rites certain directions were regarded as auspicious because of superstitious beliefs. Thus for instance, Yama is regarded as the presiding deity of southern direction and during funeral ceremonies the head of the dead was kept towards the south.

Again in some of the rites certain objects were used which symbolised certain ideas. Thus Aśmārōhaṇa in Upanayana and Vivāha was prescribed simply because stone was regarded as symbol of fixity and firmness. The 'Dhruva Darśana' in marriage is an identical prescription. Sesamum and rice were indicative of fertility and prosperity.<sup>135</sup>

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135 इमान् लाजानावपाम्यग्नौ समृद्धिकरणं तव ॥

Ā.G.S. I. 7.8.



In the performance of the Samskāras prohibitions, at least in some, forms necessary part. From scientific angle of vision we may at the present moment explain the significance of certain prohibitions, but there are others which cannot be explained in the present state of our knowledge. It may be that the mysteries and dangers associated with birth and death of beings might have contributed to the formation of restrictions that later on became well-defined taboos about pregnancy, birth, childhood, adolescence, youth, marriage, death and corpse. Thus we notice taboos in connection with lucky and unlucky days, months and years.<sup>136</sup>

Quite rationally we may explain why during natural calamity, political revolution, death of a person, monthly course of woman etc. Samskāras were postponed.<sup>137</sup> In all

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136 जन्मर्क्षे जन्मांशे जन्मदिवसे शुभं त्यजेत् ।

Ratnakōśa, quoted by Gadādhara on P.G.S. I. 4-8.

श्रावणेऽपि च पौषे वा कन्या भाद्रपदे तथा ।

चैत्राश्वयुक्कार्तिकेषु याति वैधव्यतां खलु ॥

Ibid., Vyāsa.

अयुग्मे दुर्भगा नारी युग्मेतु विधवा भवेत् ।

Rājamārtāṇḍa, Ibid.

ऊर्ध्वं कार्तिक्या आवैशाख्याः यथाकामं वा चित्रापक्षं तु वर्जयेत् ।

Kauśika sūtra, 75.2-4

137 दिग्दाहे दिनमेकं च गृहे सप्तदिनानि तु ।

भूकम्पे च समुत्पन्ने त्र्यहमेव तु वर्जयेत् ॥

उल्कापाते त्रिदिवसं धूम्रे पञ्चदिनानि च ।

वज्रपाते चैकदिनं वर्जयेत् सर्वकर्मसु ।

विवाहव्रतचूडासु यस्य भार्या रजस्वला ।

तदा न मङ्गलं कार्यं शुद्धे कार्यं शुभेषुभिः ॥

Vṛddhamanu; Ibid.

these cases proper mental makeup is wanting. Therefore prohibitions with reference to food in particular Saṃskāras.<sup>138</sup> Sometimes again food was altogether prohibited.<sup>139</sup>

One more significant constituent of the Saṃskāra is the tendency of Divination or augury. Divination is the science which seeks to discover the will of the supernatural powers with the intention of taking precautionary steps. Of all divinatory methods astrology played most vital role in the history of the Saṃskāras. The position of stars and planets was significantly observed. They were believed to be giving signs of the will of the gods. The Gṛhyasūtras gradually stressed the importance of this science and rigid rules were formulated in the later treatises for every Saṃskāra. It thus became a convention to see that every Saṃskāra should be performed under an auspicious planet.

Even certain marks in the body were significantly explained. The Liṅga-purāṇa has detailed discussion on the subject, and is mentioned in case of selection of the bride and the bridegroom.<sup>140</sup> Here the direction of Gōbhila is meaningful.<sup>141</sup> The Annaprāśana ceremony has in it identical provisions.<sup>142</sup>

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138 त्रिरात्रमक्षारलवणाशिनौ स्याताम् ॥

P.G.S. I. 8.21; on marriage. This may be explained as an attempt to teach the couple self-restraint, which is of great value in married life.

139 Ibid. III 10.25-26.

140 Quoted in the Vīramitrōdaya Saṃskāra: Vol. II. P. 752.

141 G.G.S. II. 1.11.

142 कृतप्राशनमुत्सङ्गात् घात्री बालं समुत्सृजेत् ।

कार्यं तस्य परिज्ञानं जीविकाया अनन्तरम् ॥

Quoted in V.M.

Pomp and grandeur, attendance of large number of persons in most of the Saṃskāras are parts or rather constituents of Saṃskāras. In some of these cases the purpose strictly is publicity (as in marriage), while in others, love and affection operate. Decoration, music, dance and other festive activities became so much associated with the observance of Saṃskāras, that the Vārāha Gr̥hyasūtra has gone upto the length of declaring Vādanakarma or instrumental music as a regular constituent of the Vivāha ceremonies. It was secular in origin.

All these constituents of the Saṃskāras contributed to the creation of religious and spiritual atmosphere of the whole act. In the words of a reputed orientalist - 'These rules and regulations and common sense elements were social in their origin. But in the course of time they were given a religious shape.'

Apart from what has been stated as the constituents of Saṃskāras we should also consider the following:

Hōma is necessary in numerous rites and ceremonies. Therefore the Gr̥hyasūtras present a detailed description of Hōma.<sup>143</sup> The Āśvalāyana Gr̥hyasūtra<sup>144</sup> prescribes that in caula, Upanayana, Gōdāna and marriage first four oblations of sacrificial butter to be made with the three mantras, Ṛ.V. IX 66, 10-12 and Ṛ.V. X 121-10 or with the Vyāhṛtis

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143 Detailed descriptions of Hōma is available in the Āśvalāya Gr̥hya Sūtra I. 3; Sāṅkhyāyana Gr̥. Sū. I-7.

144 I. 4.

are to be made. According to some teachers it may be done with a combination (of the Rk. verse and Vyāhrtis). While according to others no such special oblations are prescribed.

Feeding of the Brāhmaṇas is generally regarded as essential part in all the Saṃskāras. Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra makes it compulsory for all acts,<sup>145</sup> while Aparārka records the view of Kātyāyana that ten Brāhmins are to be entertained with food at all the Saṃskāras beginning with Garbhādhāna.<sup>146</sup> The reason perhaps might have been no other than securing the blessings of these brahmins and it was counted as of significant value by all the members of the society.

Ācamana is strictly essential in all religious acts. All rites start with Ācamana by the performer. Prāṇāyāma is to follow and reference to the Dēśa (place) and Kāla (time) is to be made and a saṃkalpa (a declaration as to rite he is performing and the purpose) should follow next. After these in all auspicious rites follow the worship of Gaṇapati, Puṇyāhavācana, the worship of the Mātṛs (mother Goddesses) and Nāndīśrāddha.

In the Gaṇapati pūjana,<sup>147</sup> the performer repeats the mantra<sup>148</sup> as a prayer and then bowing to Gaṇēśa says - 'ॐ श्रीमहागणपतये नमः । निर्विघ्नं कुरु' (salutations to the Great Gaṇapati,

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145 शुचीन् मन्त्रवतः सर्वकार्येषु भोजयेत् ।

Āpa. Dha. Sū. II. 6.15.9.

146 यदाह कात्यायनः - गर्भाधानादि सर्वेषु ब्राह्मणान् भोजयेद्दशा ॥

P. 32.

147 The Saṃskāra Ratnamāla (P. 27) observes that worship of Gaṇēśa should be done at the beginning of all acts for doing away with the obstacles:

make this rite free from disturbances). The Gōbhila Smṛti (in verse)<sup>149</sup> prescribes that at the beginning of all rites, there should be worship of the mātṛs together with Gaṇādhīpa (lord Gaṇēśa). The appellation Gaṇapati was used in connection with Brahmanaspati. In the Matsya Purāṇa (chap. 250-52-55) there is description of how images of Vināyakas are to be made. The Kṛtyaratnākara<sup>150</sup> quotes a passage from the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa for the worship of Gaṇēśa on the fourth day of Bhādrapada. The name Gaṇēśa, perhaps indicates the importance and essentiality of such an act. As Gaṇēśa is the lord of beings, therefore in all auspicious rites it is quite in the fitness of things that obedience should be shown towards him in recognition of the covetable position occupied by him. It may be interest to note here that Vināyaka (another name of Gaṇapati) has been mentioned in the Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 14) as evil spirit. This has its support from the text of Vaijavāpa Gṛhya Sūtra.<sup>151</sup> The Yājñavalkya Smṛti<sup>152</sup> observes that Vināyaka is appointed by Rudra and Brahma to lord over the Gaṇas and thus he has changed his position. He is not only an obstructor of acts, but also can bring success and prosperity. In the later ages, however, Gaṇapati has surrendered his previous characters and taken up the new one of removing the abstacles, which he was originally supposed to create.

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तच्च सर्वकर्मस्वादौ कर्तव्यं निर्विघ्नत्वात्, न ऋते त्वत्क्रियते इति मन्त्रलिङ्गात् । नार्चितो हि गणाध्यक्षो यज्ञादौ  
यत्सुरोत्तमाः । तस्मादविघ्नं समुत्पन्नं तत्क्रोधोजमिदं खलु ॥ - इति पद्मपुराणाच्च ।

148 गणानां त्वा गणपतिं हवामहे । R.V. II. 23.1.

149 I. 13.

150 P. 271.

151 Quoted in Aparārka, P. 522 on Yājñ. I. 275.

152 I. 271-294.

Signalling of auspicious day (Puṇyāhavācana) is another constituent of the Saṃskāras.

The Saṃskāra Ratnamāla has very elaborate description of the act. The main object of such an act is a good intention of auspicious start leading to the desired consequences.<sup>153</sup>

- 153 The performer first here utters: अमुकनाम्नः मम करिष्यमाणविवाहाख्याय कर्मणे स्वस्ति भवन्तो ब्रुवन्तु । Other Brahmins present are to reply - ॐ स्वस्ति. Again the same request is made with reference to पुण्याह and ऋद्धि. (Vide S.R.M. Pp. 32-33) Vyāsa mentions the cases in which स्वस्तिवाचन is done:

संपूज्य गन्धमाल्याद्यैर्ब्राह्मणान् स्वस्ति वाचयेत् ।

धर्मकर्माणि माङ्गल्ये संग्रामेऽद्भुतदर्शने ॥

(mentioned in S.R.M. P. 28.)

In the Gr̥hya Pāriśiṣṭha we find अथ स्वस्तिवाचनं पूर्तिष्वृद्धिर्विवाहान्ता अपत्यसंस्काराः प्रतिष्ठोद्यापने पूर्ते ।

(mentioned in Saṃskāra Ratnamāla: P. 28)

Āśvalāyana: वैदिके तान्त्रिके चादौ स्वस्तिवाचनमिष्यते । (P. 28)

In another Smṛti: गर्भाधानादिसंस्कारेष्विष्टापूर्तकृतास्वपि ।

वृद्धिश्राद्धं पुरा कार्यं कर्मादौ स्वस्तिवाचनम् ॥

(P. 28)

The S.R.M. quotes text (P. 29) which prescribes Svastivācanam in all religious ceremonies including the following:

पुण्येऽहनि तु संप्राप्ते विवाहे चौलके तथा ।

व्रतबन्धं च यज्ञादौ तथा जननकर्मणि ॥

गृहाराम्भे धनप्राप्तौ तीर्थाभिगमने तथा ।

गृहप्रवेशने चैव ग्रामस्याभिनिवेशने ॥

नवग्रहमखे शान्तावद्भुतानां तथैव च ।

गजबन्धे तुरङ्गानां दाशादीनां च सग्रहे ॥

धर्मकर्मसु सर्वेषु प्रारम्भे स्वस्तिवाचनम् ॥

Viśvaprakāśa adds further:

उपाकर्मोत्सर्जनयोः श्रौतानां कर्मणां तथा ।

प्रथमानुष्ठितावेव स्वस्तिवाचनमिष्यते ॥

S.R.M. (P. 29).

The mātṛs are 'Mother Goddesses' and their worship in all religious acts is perhaps of later origin. The Sūtra literature does not allude to the worship of Mātṛs. Bāṇa in his Kādambarī refers to the Mātṛs, to their worship and to ruined temples of these deities.<sup>154</sup> The Bihar stone Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta<sup>155</sup> refers to the worship of the Mātṛs. A temple to the Mātṛs is stated to have been built by Mayūrākṣha, minister of Viśvavarman in 480 of the Mālava Era i.e. 423-24 A. D.<sup>156</sup> The seven mothers referred to in Ṛgvēda<sup>157</sup> to regulate Sōma when it is being prepared, may have some connection with the Mātṛs. The details of the worship of the Mātṛs are available in the Saṃskāraratnamālā. (pp 43-44)

Nāndīśrāddha is also an essential constituent of the Saṃskāras.<sup>158</sup> This Nāndīśrāddha and Mātṛkāpūjanam should not be repeated for each rite.<sup>159</sup> Nāndīśrāddha is same as

Yama here observed:

पुण्याहवाचनं सर्वं ब्राह्मणस्य विधीयते ।

तदेव च निरोकारं कुर्यात्क्षत्रियवैश्ययोः ॥ (P. 29)

154 अभिनवलिखितमातृपटपूजनव्यग्रघात्रीजनम् in Para 64, Pūrvabhāga, Kādambarī.

155 Gupta Inscriptions, Pp. 47, 49.

156 Gupta Inscriptions, Pp. 74

157 जज्ञानं सप्त मातरो वेधा मशासनश्रिये ।

R.V. IX. 102.4.

158 The S.R. M. observes:

तच्च गर्भाधानादि गर्भसंस्कारेषु जातकर्माद्यपत्यसंस्कारेषु श्रवणकर्मादिषु वापीकूपतडागारामाद्युत्सर्गादिषु देवप्रतिष्ठायां व्रतोद्यापने वानप्रस्थाद्याश्रमस्वीकारे तुलापुरुषादिमहादानादौ नूतनगृहप्रवेशे काण्डव्रतेषु, राजाभिषेके शान्तिकपौष्टिकेषु अग्न्याधानादिश्रौतकर्मणामुपाकर्मोत्सर्जनयोः पार्वणस्थालीपाकश्रावणकर्मादीनाञ्च प्रथमे प्रयोगे उत्सवादौ च कार्यम् ।

P. 40

159 एतच्छ्राद्धमातृकापूजनं

चैकस्यानेकसंस्कारेष्वेककर्तृकेषु युगपदुपस्थितेषु सर्वादौ सकृदेव कार्यं न तु

प्रतिसंस्कारमावृत्तिः ॥

S.R.M. P. 40.

Vṛddhiśrāddha (vide Yāj - वृद्धौ नान्दीमुखान् पितॄन् यजेत्.) and in it there is Śrāddha of Mātṛ, Pitṛ and Mātāmaha (Mitākṣhara on Yāj 1. 250). In short this Śrāddha was to be performed on very happy occasions like marriage of sons and daughters, their nāmakaraṇa, entry in a new house etc. (For references vide Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa 28. 4-7; Bhaviṣya Purāṇa 1. 185. 5. 13; Viṣṇu Purāṇa III 13. 2. 7. The Brahma Purāṇa quoted by Hemādri śrā p. 107) observes that the three paternal ancestors before prapitāmaha are designated as Nāndimukha pitṛs (पिता पितामहश्चैव तथैव प्रपितामहः । त्रयो ह्यश्रुमुखा ह्येते पितरः संप्रकीर्तिताः । तेभ्यः पूर्वं त्रयो ये तु ते तु नान्दीमुखा इति ॥) That family customs and conventions had a great bearing in shaping the nature of Nāndī Śrāddha is hinted at by the Bhaviṣyapurāṇa. The idea of Nāndī Śrāddha was a form of gratitude to the forefathers who are gratefully remembered on happy occasions.

It is of interest in this connection to state that a separate deity was supposed to preside over different Saṃskāras. The details of such deities are available in the text of Baudhāyana, recorded in the Saṃskāraratnamālā of Bhatta Gopinātha Dīkṣita.<sup>160</sup>

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160 कर्मदेवता आहबौधायनः- गर्भाधानस्य ब्रह्मा, पुंसवनस्य प्रजापतिः, सीमन्तस्य धाता, विष्णुबलेर्विष्णुर्जातकर्मणो मृत्युर्नामकर्मणः सविता, तस्यान्ते प्रजापतिर्निष्क्रमणस्य सविता तस्यान्ते चित्रियान्यन्नप्राशनस्य सविता चौलस्य केशिनस्तस्यान्ते प्रजापतिरूपनयनस्येन्द्रः श्रद्धामेधे अन्ते विसर्गे सुश्रवाः पुनरूपनयनस्याग्निरथ यदि ब्रह्मचर्यव्रतमाचरेत्तस्मिन्प्रायहोमे सविता समावर्तनस्य....। S.R.Māla. P. 32



### C. VARIETIES OF SAMSKĀRAS

We have noticed how Samskāras have originated and to what extent religious and spiritual ideas have helped to the growth of the constituents of the Samskāras. As we have already noticed, India is a vast country, covering wide amount of space, having in it different types and classes of people with diversity of culture and tradition. As religious ideas and beliefs differ at different levels of culture, they are bound to react on the growth, development and decaying of the number of Samskāras. In the process of evolution several of them have evolved, while others have died out. It is interesting that the number of the Samskāras range between the two extremes, two<sup>161</sup> and forty.<sup>162</sup> From the study of the definition of Hārīta, it is clear that he was not against the number of Samskāras mentioned in Smṛtis and these Samskāras were definitely two in number. What he exactly wanted to do is to bring out the salient characteristics of them under two heads. Gautama on the otherhand drags the number to forty and adds with it eight virtues of the soul. They are

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161 Hārīta has in a wider and general way classified the Samskāras under the hedas - Brāhma and Daiva. Under it have been included the Samskāras mentioned in the Smṛti texts. The Pāka Yajñas (offerings of cooked food), Yājñas with burnt offerings and sacrifices in which Sōma is offered have been given the application of Daiva Samskāras:

तथा च हारीतः - द्विविधः संस्कारो भवति ब्राह्मो दैवश्च । गर्भाधानादि स्मार्तो ब्राह्मः । पाकयज्ञहविर्यज्ञसौम्याश्चेति दैवः । ब्रह्मसंस्कारसंस्कृतः ऋषीणां समानतां सलोकतां सायुज्यं गच्छति । दैवेनोत्तरेण संस्कृतो देवानां समानतां सलोकतां सायुज्यं गच्छति । इति ॥

Smṛticandrikā I. P. 13; Parāśara Mādhava I, Part II, P. 18; Samskāra Prakāśa, P. 135. [According to the editors of the Parāśara Mādhava it is Hārīta Dharma Sūtra XI. 1.5, from the manuscript he had discovered.]

162 Gautama (VIII. 14-24) makes mention of forty Samskāras and eight virtues of the soul.

Garbhādhāna, Puṃsavana, Sīmantōnnayana, Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Annaprāśana, Caula, Upanayana - (eight in all), the four vratas of the Vēda, Snāna (or Samāvartana), Vivāha, five daily Mahāyajñas (for Dēva, Pitṛ, Manuṣya, Bhūta and Brahmas, seven Pākayajñas, viz: Aṣṭakā, Pārvaṇasthālīpāka, Śrāddha, Śrāvaṇi, Āgrahāyaṇī, Caitrī, Āśvayujī), seven haviryajñas (in which there is burnt offering but no sōma viz: Agnyādhēya, Agnihōtra, Darśapūrṇamāsa, Āgrayaṇa, Cāturmāsya, Nirūdha Paśubandha and Sautrāmaṇi), seven Sōma sacrifices (Agniṣṭōma, Atyagniṣṭōma, Ukthya, Ṣōdaśin, Vājapēya, Atirātra, Aptōryāma). It is quite clear that Gauthama has used the term in the most extended sense. Śankha as quoted by the Smṛti Candrika (I. p. 13) and the Subōdhinī on mit. II-4 follows Gautama. Vaikhānasa speaks of eighteen Śārīra Saṃskāras (in which he includes Utthāna, Pravāsāgamana, Piṇḍavardhana, which are seen nowhere else as Saṃskāras) and twenty two yajñas (i.e. five daily yajñas as one, and seven pākayajñas, seven haviryajñas and seven sōma yajñas).<sup>163</sup> Most of the Gṛhya Sūtras, Dharma Sūtras and the Smṛtis do not enumerate so many Saṃskāras. Angiras<sup>164</sup> mentions the twentyfive Saṃskāras. They include all Saṃskāras of Gauthama from Garbhādhāna to the five daily yajñas (which are reckoned as one Saṃskāra by Angiras) and after that Nāmakaraṇa and Niṣkramaṇa are added. Besides, Viṣṇubali, Āgrāyaṇa, Aṣṭaka Śrāvaṇi, Āśvayujī, Mārgaśīrṣī (same as Āgrahāyaṇī) Pārvaṇa, Utsarga and Upākarma are enumerated as the remaining Saṃskāras by Aṅgiras.

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163 Vaikhānasa Gṛhyasūtra I, 1. P.1.

164 Quoted in the Saṃskāra Mayūkha, Saṃskāra Prakāśa, P. 135 and other digests

The Saṃskāras have been dealt with in details mostly in the Gṛhya Sūtras and the Smṛti texts. The word Saṃskāra did not perhaps attain at first the significance which was developed at later ages. The element of purification associated with the term Saṃskāra was there, no doubt. Thus in the Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra<sup>165</sup> and Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra<sup>166</sup> we hear of Pañcabhūsaṃskāras and the Pāka Saṃskāras by which is meant brushing, sprinkling and cleansing the sacrificial place and cooking food for sacrifice.

In the Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra,<sup>167</sup> the Pākayajñas include within themselves the bodily Saṃskāras; and in the same text the Pākayajñas have been mentioned as of seven varieties; namely Huta, Prahuta, Āhuta, Śūla gava, Bali haraṇa, Pratyavarōhaṇa and Aṣṭaka Hōma. The Huta covers the rites from Vivāha to Sīmantōnnayana.<sup>168</sup> Jātakarma and Caula are called Prahuta perhaps because of the fact that here presentations are offered (to the brāhmins) after offerings to the fire.<sup>169</sup> In the Āhuta class are included the two, namely Upanayana and Samāvartana. Herein after Hōma, gifts are offered and something is also

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165 I. 3.1.

166 I. 1.2.

167 यथो एतद्भुतः प्रहुत आहुतश्शूलगवो बलिहरणं प्रत्यवरोहणमष्टकाहोम इति सप्त पाकयज्ञसंस्था इति ।

Bau. Gr. Sū.: I. 1.1

168 तत्र यद्भूयते स हुतो यथैतद्विवाहस्सीमन्तोन्नयनं चेति ॥

Bau. Gr. Sū.: I. 1.3.

तत्रा हि हूयत एव ।

Bau. Gr. Sū.: I. 1.4.

169 अथ यद्भुत्वा दीयते स प्रहुतो यथैतज्जातकर्म चैलञ्चेति ।

B.G.S. I. 1.5

accepted.<sup>170</sup> Pāraskara classifies the Pākayajñas<sup>171</sup> under four heads namely Āhuta, Huta, Prahuta and Prāṣita and in the Hariharabhāṣya, they have been duly explained.<sup>172</sup>

According to Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra the number of Saṃskāras are thirteen, namely, Vivaha, Garbhādhāna, Puṃsavana, Sīmanthōnnayana, Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Upaniṣkramaṇa, Annaprāśana, Cūḍākaraṇa, Karṇavēdha (Gṛhyaśēṣa), Upanayana, Samāvartana and Pitṛmēdha. In the Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra also the Saṃskāras have been mentioned as thirteen. Instead of Karṇavēdha (of Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra) we here find mention of Kēśānta (P. G. S: 2. 1. 12-25). In the Hiranyakēśi Gṛhya Sūtra the following Saṃskāras have been mentioned: Upanayana, Samāvartana, Vivāha, Sīmantōnnayana, Puṃsavana, Jātakarma, Mēdhājanana (II. 3. 9), Nāmakaraṇa, Annaprāśana and Cūḍākaraṇa, numbering ten in all.

The Vaikhānasa Gṛhya Sūtra, as already mentioned, records eighteen such rites and the names deserve mention here because of the fact that some of them are peculiar. According to this text, the eighteen Saṃskāras are<sup>173</sup> - Ṛtusaṅgama,<sup>174</sup> Garbhādhāna,

170 अथ यद्धुत्वा दत्त्वा चादीयते स आहुतः यथैतदुपनयनं समावर्तनं चेति ।

Ibid., I. 1.7.

171 In the Harihara Bhāṣya of the Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra we find the following explanation of Pākayajña: पच्यते श्रप्यते ओदनादिकमस्मिन्निति पाको गृह्याग्निः तस्मिन् पाके नाऽन्यत्रेति भावः । पाके यज्ञाः पाकयज्ञाः । यतः वैवाहिकेऽग्नौ कुर्वीत गार्ह कर्म यथाविधि । पञ्चयज्ञविधानञ्च पंक्तिं चान्वाहिकीं गृही ॥ इति मनुना दैनन्दिनपाको गृह्येऽग्नौ समर्थ्यते । on P. G. S. 4-1.

172 हुतः होममात्रं यथा सायंप्रातर्होमः । अहुतः होमबलिरहितं कर्म यथा स्रस्तरारोहणम् । प्रहुतो यत्र होमो बलिकर्मभक्षणं च यथा पक्षादिकर्म । प्रोशितो यत्र प्राशनमात्रं न होमो न बलिः यथा सर्वासां गवां पयसि पायसश्रपणानन्तरं ब्राह्मणभोजनम् ।

173 ऋतुगमनगर्भाधानपुंसवनसीमन्तविष्णुबलिजातकर्म्मोत्थाननामकरणान्नप्राशनप्रवासगमनपिण्डवर्धनचौडकोपनयनपारायणव्रत

Sīmanta, Viṣṇubali,<sup>175</sup> Jātakarma, Utthāna,<sup>176</sup> Nāmakaraṇa, Annaprāśana, Pravāśa-gamana,<sup>177</sup> Piṇḍavardhana,<sup>178</sup> Caulaka, Upanayana, Pārāyaṇa, Vratibandhavisarga, Upākarma, Utsarjana, Samāvartana and Pāṇigrahaṇa. In the same text Saṃskāras have been very broadly used as of two classes - as Jātaka Saṃskāra (rites for the living ones) and Mr̥ta Saṃskāra (rites of the dead). By the observances of the first one this world is conquered, while one can conquest the next world by the second Saṃskāra.<sup>179</sup>

The Vārāha Gr̥hya Sūtra describes such Saṃskāras, namely Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Dantōdgamana, Annaprāśana, Cūḍākarāṇa, Upanayana, Upākaraṇa, Utsarjana, Gōdāna, Samāvartana, Vivāha, Garbhādhāna, Puṃsavana and Sīmantōnnayana. In that list the rite of Dantōdgamana is a new one, not mentioned by other writers on Gr̥hya rites, perhaps because of the fact that it was of minor importance.<sup>180</sup> Other two special Saṃskāras mentioned in this text are Upākaraṇam<sup>181</sup> and Utsarjana.<sup>182</sup>

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बन्धविसर्गोपाकर्मसमावर्तनपाणिग्रहणानीत्यष्टादश संस्काराः शारीराः ।

Vaikhānasa Gr̥hya Sūtra I. 1 (P.1)

174 About this rite it has been observed- शारीरेषु संस्कारेषु ऋतुसंगमनवर्जं नान्दीमुखं कुर्यात् ।

Vai. Gr. Sū. 2.1.

For other details of Ṛtugamana Vide Vai. Gr. Sū. II. 8-9- (Pp. 41-43)

175 Vai. Gr. Sū. 3.13.

176 Vai. Gr. Sū. 3.18.

177 Ibid., 3.22.

178 Ibid., 3.22.

179 जातकसंस्कारो मृतसंस्कारश्चेति द्वौ संस्कारौ भवतः । पूर्वेणैवं लोकं परेणपरलोकं जयति ।

Ibid. 7.1.

180 पुत्रस्य जातदन्ते यजेताग्निं गवा पशुना वा ।

विप्रोषितः प्रत्येत्य पुत्रस्य मूर्धानं त्रिराजिघ्रेत्-पशुना त्वा हीकारेणाभिजिघ्रमीति ।

In the Gṛhya Sūtra of Gōbhila we find the following principal Saṃskāras: Vivāha,<sup>183</sup> Puṃsavana,<sup>184</sup> Sīmantakaraṇam,<sup>185</sup> Nāmadhēyakaraṇam,<sup>186</sup> Chūḍākaraṇa,<sup>187</sup> Upanayana<sup>188</sup> and Gōdāna.<sup>189</sup>

In the Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra we notice discussion on the following Saṃskāras - Vivāha, Sīmantōnnayanam, Puṃsavanam, Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇam, Annaprāśana, Caula and Gōdāna.

The study of the Gṛhya Sūtras makes it clear that in the main Saṃskāras like Vivāha, Puṃsavana, Sīmantōnnayanam, Upanayana etc., the Gṛhya Sūtra writers are more or less unanimous, but the difference of opinion arises with respect to very minor rites, such as

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जातकर्मवद्धस्ताङ्गुलिं प्रवेष्ट्य, तेनास्य कर्णावाजपेत् ॥

Vārāha Gṛhya Sūtra. III - 8-10.

181 वर्षासु श्रवणेनाध्यायानुपाकरोति । हस्तेन वा । प्रौष्ठपदीमित्येके ।

Vide : Vārāha Gṛhya Sūtra VIII. 1.5.

182 अर्धपञ्चमान्मासानधीत्य पञ्चारोहषष्ठान् वा दक्षिणायनं वाधीत्याथोत्सृजन्त्येतेन धर्मेण ॥

V.G.S. VII, 7-8.

183 Vide Prapāṭhaka II, Kaṇḍikā 1-5.

184 तृतीयस्य गर्भमासस्यादिमदेशे पुंसवनस्य कालः ।

II. 6.1.

185 Ibid. II. 7.2.

186 जननादशरात्रे व्युष्टे शतरात्रे संवत्सरे वा नामधेयकरणम् ।

Ibid. II. 7.2.

187 अथातस्तृतीये वर्षे चूडाकरणम् ।

Ibid., II. 9.1.

188 गर्भाष्टमेषु ब्राह्मणमुपनयेत् ।

Ibid., II. 10.1.

189 अथातः षोडशे वर्षे गोदानम् ।

Ibid., III. 1.

‘Dantōgamana’ (Vārāha Gr̥hya Sūtra III. 8-10). Some of the Saṃskāras have minor importance because of the fact that they have originated from paternal feeling. Mention may be made of the rite of ‘Mēdhājanana’, which has been given an independent status of Saṃskāra by the Hirāṇyakēśi Gr̥hya Sūtra (II. 3. 9). Gōbhila Gr̥hya Sūtra also makes mention of Mēdhājanana but it is not given perhaps an independent status. The formalities here are a bit different<sup>190</sup> from what has been referred to in the Hirāṇyakēśi Gr̥hya Sūtra.

Coming to the Dharmasūtras, we notice that Gauthama has made mention of forty Saṃskāras. Baudhāyana does not mention the name of Saṃskāras by name. Nor does Āpastamba discuss the question of the Saṃskāras. Vaśiṣṭa is silent on the issue. In the text of Viṣṇu there are mentions of the following Saṃskāras: Niṣēka,<sup>191</sup> Pūṃsavanam,<sup>192</sup> Sīmāntōnnayanam,<sup>193</sup> Jātakarma,<sup>194</sup> Nāmadhēyam,<sup>195</sup> Ādityadarśana,<sup>196</sup> Anna-

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190 तथैवते मेधाजननम् सर्पिः प्राशयेत् जातरूपेण वा आदाय कुमारस्य मुखे जुहोति - मेधां ते मित्रावरुणावित्येतयाचां सदसस्पतिमद्भुतमिति च ।

G.G.S. II, 7.19.

191 गर्भस्य स्पष्टताज्ञाने निषेककरणम् ।

Viṣṇu Smṛti 27-1.

192 स्पन्दनात् पुरा पुंसवनम् ।

Ibid., 27.2.

193 षष्टिमे सीमन्तोन्नयनम् ।

Ibid., 27.3.

194 जाते च दारके जातकर्म ।

Ibid., 27.4.

195 आशौचव्यपगमे नामधेयम् ।

Ibid., 27.5.

prāśana.<sup>197</sup> Cūḍākaraṇa.<sup>198</sup> Vivāha (Vis. Sm. 27/13-14) and Upanayana.<sup>199</sup> When we make a study of the Smṛti texts in respect to Saṃskāras we notice that Daiva Saṃskāras were dwindling away and this was perhaps due to the fact that sacrificial religion gradually showed a tendency of dying out gradually. According to Manu the Saṃskāras intended for purification of the body of the individual, here in this world and in the world hereafter.<sup>200</sup> Whatever blemishes that may touch an individual while remaining in the foetus may be removed by the Saṃskāras like Garbhādhāna, Jātakarma, Cūḍākaraṇa and Upanayana.<sup>201</sup> In this connection it has been proclaimed that the study of the Vēdas and observances of the prescribed rules etc. make the body eligible for communion with the highest spirit.<sup>202</sup> He has mentioned the following Saṃskāras, namely, Garbhādhāna,<sup>203</sup> Jātakarma,<sup>204</sup> Nāmadhēya,<sup>205</sup> Niśkramaṇa,<sup>206</sup> Annaprāśana,<sup>207</sup> Cūḍākarma,<sup>208</sup> Upanayana,<sup>209</sup>

196 चतुर्थे मास्यादित्यदर्शनम् ।

Ibid., 27. 10.

197 षष्ठेऽन्नप्राशनम् ।

Ibid., 27.11.

198 तृतीयाब्दे चूडाकरणम् ।

Ibid., 27.12.

199 गर्भाष्टमेऽब्दे ब्राह्मणस्योपनयनम् ।

Ibid., 27.15.

200 M.S. II. 26 and II. 66.

201 गर्भोर्मैर्जातकर्मचौडमौञ्जीनिबन्धनैः ।

बैजिकं गार्भिकं चैनो द्विजानामपमृज्यते ॥

M.S. II- 27.

Cf. एवमेनः शमं याति बीजगर्भसमुद्भवम् ।

Yājñā. Smṛ. I-13.

202 M.S. II. 28.

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Kēśānta.<sup>210</sup> Vivāha and Śmaśāna.<sup>211</sup>

Yājñavalkya also like Manu mentions the Saṃskāras with the two limits, beginning with Niṣēka and ending with Śmaśāna. He mentions Garbhādhāna, Pūṃsavana, Sīmāntōnnayana, Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Niṣkramaṇa, Annaprāśana, Cūḍākarma,<sup>212</sup> Upanayana,<sup>213</sup> Vivāha<sup>214</sup> and Śmaśāna. The rite of Kēśānta is omitted from the list of Yājñavalkya and that was perhaps 'owing to the decline of the Vēdic studies and its confusion with the Samāvartana.' Viṣṇu mentions the following Saṃskāras namely - Niṣēka, Pūṃsavana, Sīmāntōnnayana, Jātakarma, Nāmadhēya, Ādityadarśana, Annaprāśana and Cūḍākarma.<sup>215</sup>

203 Ibid., II. 27.

204 Ibid., II. 29.

205 Ibid., II. 30.

206 Ibid., II. 34.

207 Ibid., II. 34.

208 Ibid., II. 35.

209 Ibid., II. 36.

210 Ibid., II. 65.

211 Ibid., II. 16. Cf. निषेकाद्याः स्मशानान्तास्तेषां वै मन्त्रतः क्रियाः ।

Yājñ. Smṛ. I-10

212 गर्भाधानमृतौ पुंसस्सवनं स्पन्दनात् पुरा ।  
षष्ठेऽष्टमे वा सीमन्तो मासेऽतो जातकर्म च ॥  
अहन्येकादशे नाम चतुर्थे मासि निष्क्रमः ।  
षष्ठेऽन्नप्राशनं मासे चूडा कार्या यथाकुलम् ॥

Yājñ. Smṛ. I-11-12.

213 गर्भाष्टमेऽष्टमे वाब्दे ब्राह्मणस्योपनायनम् ।

Yājñ. Smṛ. I. 14.

214 Yājñ. Smṛ. I. 52.

215 गर्भस्य स्पष्टताज्ञाने निषेककर्म etc. 27. I-12.

Vyāsa mentions most of the Saṃskāras.<sup>216</sup> We have from Śaṅkha also names of certain Saṃskāras.<sup>217</sup>

It is of interest to note that none of the following writers on Smṛti have made any specific mention of the Saṃskāras by name, namely, Atri, Hārīta (Vide: Hārīta Smṛti-included in Smṛtīnām Samuccayaḥ. Pp. 136-141, 236-355), Āṅgirā, Yama, Āpastamba (saṃhita), Kātyāyana, Bṛhaspati, Parāśara, Likhita, Dakṣa, Śātātapa and Vaśiṣṭha. It would not be proper to suppose that Saṃskāras died out in the society when these legal treatises were written and compiled. The case is otherwise. What we have to

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Laghuviṣṇu mentions by name Sīmāntōnnayana, Jātakarma and Upanayana. (Vide स्मृतीनां समुच्चयः I- P. 117.)

- 216 गर्भाधानं पुंसवनं सीमन्तो जातकर्म च ।  
 नामक्रियानिष्क्रमणेऽन्नाशनं वपनक्रिया ॥  
 कर्णवेधो व्रतादेशो वेदारम्भक्रियाविधिः ।  
 केशान्तः स्नानमुद्राहो विवाहोऽग्निपरिग्रहः ।  
 त्रेताग्निसंग्रहश्चेति संस्काराः षोडशस्मृताः ॥

I-13 to 15.

- 217 गर्भस्य स्पष्टता ज्ञाने निषेकः परिकीर्तितः ।  
 ततस्तु स्पन्दनात्कार्यं सवनन्तु विचक्षणः ।

II-1.

आशौचे तु व्यतिक्रान्ते नामकर्म विधीयते ।

II -2.

चतुर्थे मासि कर्तव्यमादित्यस्य प्रदर्शनम् ।  
 षष्ठेऽन्नप्राशनं मासि चूडाकार्या यथाकुलम् ॥

II -5.

गर्भाष्टमे..... II - 6.

Marriage has been dealt with in the fifth chapter.

add here is this that the Saṃskāras attained age-old celebrity to such an extent that the Smṛti writers did not perhaps feel it wiser to deal with them afresh for fear of repetition. About those who have discussed the question it may be observed that they treated these topics to render their works more elaborate and comprehensive.

The Mahābhārata makes no mention of specific knowledge relating to forty Saṃskāras as mentioned by Gautama.<sup>218</sup> In the Anuśāsana parva we get acquainted with the rite of Garbhādhāna.<sup>219</sup> In the Śānti parva<sup>220</sup> the rite of Garbhādhāna has been spoken of as the cause of Dharma, Artha and Kāma. No details are available about Puṃsavana and Sīmantōnnayana but they have been referred to<sup>221</sup> Jātakarma has been referred to more than once.<sup>222</sup> Nāmakaraṇa has been referred to<sup>223</sup> Cūḍakarma and Upanayana have been mentioned by name.<sup>224</sup> Marriage is too well known to be mentioned separately. We find here a vedic rite named Upākarma. This was perhaps called so because it was outside all Gṛhya rites. In it the father after coming from a distant place would place his palm on the head of the son along with muttering of mantras.<sup>225</sup>

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218 Vide Mahābhārata Samāja P. 55. Second edition by Sukhamay saptatīrtha.

219 Anu. P. 162. 41-42.

220 123/3 (Vide also commentary of Nīlakaṇṭha)

221 Ādi. P. 74/119; 74/3; 178/2; Ādi P. 109/18; Ādi 118/14.

222 Śānti Parva 265/16.

223 Ādi P. 121/67.

224 Ādi P. 221/87; Anu. 95/25; Śānti 233/2.

225 Śānti Parva 265/16.

So far as the Purāṇas are concerned, the Agnipurāṇa distinctly makes mention of the forty eight types of Saṃskāras,<sup>226</sup> namely Garbhādhāna, Pūṃsavana, Sīmantōnnayana, Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Annaprāśana, Cūḍā, Brahmacyavratas, Vaiṣṇavī, Pārthī, Bhautikī, Śrautikī, Gōdāna, Snātaka, Seven Pāka Yajñas, Aṣṭavā, Pārvaṇasrāddha, Śrāvaṇī, Agrāyaṇī, Caitrī, Āśvayujī, Ādhāna, Agnihōtra, Darśa, Paurṇamāsa, Cāturmāsya, Paśubandha, Sautrāmaṇī, Agniṣtōma, Ukhta, Ṣōḍaśī, Vājapēya, Atirātra, Āptōryāma, Hiranyāṅghri, Hiranyākṣa, Hiranyamitra, Hiranyapāṇī, Hēmākṣa, Hēmāṅga, Hēmasūtra, Hiranyāsya, Hiranyāṅga, Hēmajihvā, Hiranyavān, Āśvamēdha compassion to all creatures, Kṣānti, Rjūtā, Śauca, Anāyāsa, Maṅgala, Akārpaṇya and Asprhā.<sup>227</sup>

226 निर्वाणादिषु दीक्षासु चत्वारिंशत्तथाष्ट च । संस्कारान् कारयेद्धीमान् शृणुतान्यैः सुरो भवेत् ॥ 32.1.

227 गर्भाधानं तु योन्यां वै ततः पुंसवनं चरेत् ॥

सीमन्तोन्नयनं चैव जातकर्म च नाम च ।

अन्नाशनं ततश्चूडा ब्रह्मचर्यव्रतानि च ॥

चत्वारि वैष्णवी पार्थी भौतिकी श्रौतिकी तथा ।

गोदानं स्नातकत्वञ्च पाकयज्ञश्च सप्त ते ॥

अष्टका पार्वणश्राद्धं श्रावण्याग्रायणीति च ।

चैत्री चाश्वयुजी सप्त हविर्यज्ञांश्च तान् शृणु ॥

आधानञ्चाग्निहोत्रञ्च दशौ वै पौर्णमासिकः ।

चातुर्मास्यं पशोर्बन्धः सौत्रामणितथापरः ॥

सोमसंस्थाः सप्त शृणु अग्निष्टोमः क्रतूत्तमः ।

अत्यग्निष्टोम उक्थश्च षोडशो वाजपेयकः ॥

अतिरात्रातोयामश्च सहस्रेषाः सवा इमे ।

हिरण्याग्निर्हिरण्याक्षो हिरण्यमित्र इत्यतः ॥

हिरण्यपाणिर्हेमाक्षो हेमाङ्गो हेमसूत्रकः ।

हिरण्यास्यो हिरण्यङ्गो हेमजिह्वो हिरण्यवान् ॥

Mention in this connection may be made of technicalities of Saṃskāradīkṣhā.<sup>228</sup>

In the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa it has been stated that the Saṃskāras were always to be regarded as cause of spiritual perfection.<sup>229</sup> Here also the Saṃskāras have been mentioned as forty eight in number.<sup>230</sup>

अश्वमेधो हि सर्वेषो गुणश्चाष्टत तान् शृणु ।  
दया च सर्वभूतेषु क्षान्तिश्चैव तथार्जवम् ॥  
शौचञ्चैवमनायासो मङ्गलञ्चापरो गुणः ।  
अकार्पण्यञ्चास्पृहा च मूलेन जुहुयाच्चतम् ॥  
सौर शक्तेय वैष्णव्य दीक्षास्त्वेते समाः स्मृताः ।

32-2 to 12.

228 Vide Agnipurāṇa, Chap. 82.

229 चत्वारिंशत्तथाष्टौ च निर्वृत्ताः शास्त्रतो नृप ।  
स याति ब्रह्मणः स्थानं ब्राह्मणत्वञ्च मानद ॥  
संस्काराः सर्वथा हेतुर्ब्रह्मत्वे नात्र संशयः ॥

2-143.

230 गर्भाधानं पुंसवनं सीमन्तोन्नयनं तथा ।  
जातकर्मान्नप्राशनञ्च चूडोपनयनं नृप ॥  
वेदव्रतानि चत्वारि स्नानञ्च तदनन्तरम् ।  
सधर्मचारिणीयोग यज्ञानां कर्म मानद ॥  
पञ्चानां कार्यमित्याहुरात्मनः श्रेयसे नृप ।  
देवपितृमनुष्याणां भूतानां ब्रह्मणस्तथा ॥  
एतेषां चाष्टकाकर्म पार्वणश्राद्धमेव हि ।  
श्रावणी चाग्रहयणी चैत्रीचाश्वयुजी तथा ॥  
पाकयज्ञास्तथा सप्त अग्न्याधानञ्च सत्क्रियाः ।  
अग्निहोत्रं तथा राजन् दर्शञ्च विधुसंभये ॥  
पौर्णमासञ्च राजेन्द्र चातुर्मास्यानि चापि हि ।  
निरूपणं पशुवधं तथा सौत्रामणीति च ॥  
हविर्यज्ञास्तथा सप्त तेषां चापि हि सत्क्रियाः ।

It has been stated that through observance of these rites purification of body takes place and it contributes to the benefit of this world and the world hereafter.<sup>231</sup>

So far as the digests (Nibandhas) are concerned we notice that these texts make it their point to discuss the Saṃskāras in details, but the general tendency of majority of them is to exclude the Daiva Saṃskāras from their treatment. We may in this connection refer to Vīramitrōdaya, the Smṛticandrika and the Saṃskāramayūkha. In all these texts the Saṃskāras mentioned by Gauthama (forty in number) have been referred to, but in actual cases they have discussed only the Brāhma or Smārta Saṃskāras beginning with Garbhādhāna and ending with Vivāha. What we mean thereby is that these digest-writers by Saṃskāra only understood the body-Saṃskāras. The funeral Saṃskāra in most of the cases has been excluded. It is of interest that in these digests we get acquainted with quite a large number of minor rites and worships. These are offshoots of the major Saṃskāras

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अग्निष्टोमोऽत्यग्निष्टोमस्तथोक्थ्यं षोडशी विदुः ॥

वाजपेयोऽतिरात्रश्च आतोयामिति वै स्मृतः ।

संस्कारेषु स्थितास्तप्त सोमाः कुरुकुलो इह ॥

इत्येते द्विजसंस्काराश्चत्वारिंशन्नृपोत्तम ।

अष्टौ चात्मगुणास्तात शृणुतानपि भारत ॥

अनसूया दया क्षान्तिरनायासं च मङ्गलम् ।

अकार्पण्यं तथा शौचमस्पृहा च कुरुद्वह ॥

Chap. II. 145-155.

The eight qualities have been defined in details in the same contest. (II-156-164)

231 वैदिकैः कर्मभिः पुण्यैर्निषेकाद्यैर्द्विजन्मनाम् ।

कार्यः शरीरसंस्कारः पावनः प्रेत्य चेह च ॥

Manu. II. 166.

and had the popular element in it, but it is definite that they were not elevated to the position of separate Saṃskāras.

In the Prayōgaratna of Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa the Saṃskāras as mentioned by Gauthama have been discussed in details. There it has been stated that certain Saṃskāras are Nitya for the Dvijātis<sup>232</sup> (twice-born castes). It records also the view of Aṅgirā that Saṃskāras are twenty five in number.<sup>233</sup> The view of one Āśvalāyana has been mentioned there, wherein these twenty five Saṃskāras have been classified under four heads - Naimittika, Vārṣika, Māsika and Nitya.<sup>234</sup> Rites beginning with Garbhādhāna and ending in Upanayana

- 232 गर्भाधानं पुंसवनं सीमन्तो बलिरेव च ।  
जातकृत्यं नामकर्म निष्क्रमोऽन्नाशनं परः ॥  
चौलकर्मोपनयनं तद्व्रतानां चतुष्टयम् ।  
स्नानोद्वाहौ चाग्रयणमष्टका च यथातथम् ॥  
श्रावण्यामाश्वयुज्यञ्च मार्गशीर्षञ्चपारणम् ।  
उत्सर्गश्चाप्युपाकर्म महायज्ञाश्च नित्यशः ॥  
संस्कारा नियताह्येते ब्राह्मणस्य विशेषतः ।

Prayōgaratna, P.1.

- 233 पञ्चविंशतिसंस्कारैः संस्कृता ये द्विजातयः ।  
ते पवित्राश्च योग्याः स्युः.....॥

Ibid., P.1.

- 234 एतेषां पञ्चविंशतीनां नैमित्तिकवार्षिकमासिकानित्य भेदेन चातुर्विध्यमाहाश्वलायनः ॥

(P.1, Line 13.)

नैमित्तिकाः षोडशोक्ताः समुद्वाहावसानकाः ।  
सत्तैवाग्रायणाद्याश्च संस्कारा वार्षिका मताः ॥  
मासिकं पार्वणं प्रोक्तमशक्तानान्तु वार्षिकम् ।  
महायज्ञास्तु नित्यास्स्युः सन्ध्यावच्चाग्निहोत्रवत् ॥

P.2.

are compulsory for all.<sup>235</sup> It has been stated there that these Saṃskāras are to be performed by the members of twice-born castes with incantations. So far as the Śūdras are concerned these are to be observed by them without any incantation. Yājñavalkya and Yama have supporting texts.<sup>236</sup>

The four-fold classification of Saṃskāras as Naimittika, Vārṣika, Māsika and Nitya does not however present a full picture of the rites, so far as their observances were concerned. The five Mahāyajñās, as already discussed have not in them the essential characteristics, namely the element of purification. They however generated good qualities and may fittingly be included under the eight good qualities of the soul as mentioned by Gautama. Śāstrakāras are wise to prescribe them as compulsory for all 'महायज्ञास्तु नित्यास्त्युः'. The Māsika and Vārṣika rites strictly refer to the acts like Pārvaṇa Śrāddha, which are motivated by the spirit of grateful remembrance of the forefathers. By designating it was intended perhaps, that they were not compulsory and this explains why a good number of them have become obsolete.

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235 अत्र गर्भाधानाद्या उपनयनान्ता एव सर्वेषां नित्यं न तु स्नानाद्याः, तेन ब्रह्मचर्यादेव प्रव्रजेदित्यादि न विरुध्यते ।

P. 2.

236 एते च द्विजानामेव समन्त्रकाः । तदाह याज्ञवल्क्यः

निषेकाद्यास्मशानान्तास्तेषां वै मन्त्रतः क्रिया ।

अत्र तेषां मन्त्रतः क्रिया इति वदन् शूद्रस्यामन्त्रकाः क्रिया इति सूचयति । अथत्वसंस्कारानधिकृत्य यमः -

शूद्रोऽप्येवं विधः कार्यः विना मन्त्रेण संस्कृतः ॥ इति ॥

P. 2.



## CHAPTER II

### UPANAYANA SAṂSKĀRA: IT'S ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

Hindu saṁskāras or purificatory rites which prepare a man and guide him gradually on his glorious march from the ordinary mundane life to a Devine Life, are not a meaningless labyrinth of ceremonies, sounds, objects and gestures, but are intended to help the Jīvātma to unfold his Powers more rapidly to overcome the obstacles on his path to self realisation.<sup>1</sup> The Garbhādhānam, the first of the sixteen Saṁskāras sanctifies the act of bringing into this world a child by the parents, not swayed by sexual emotions or desire for sexual indulgences but by the sacred motive of begetting a virtuous progeny. The couple who get married according to vedic injunctions are expected to observe rites and ceremonies intended to purify their thoughts, take such type of food which would preserve the potency of life-seed and conjugate in an atmosphere purified by sacred aspiration. The Garbhādhāna rite is also known by the names Niṣēka and Putrēṣṭi. On the second or third month, after Garbhādhāna the couple observe the Puṁsavana Saṁskāra, taking a vow of celibacy till the next Garbhādhāna. The mind of the pregnant mother is elevated to higher spiritual thoughts.

On the fourth or sixth months, the Sīmantōnnayana saṁskāra is performed to energise the brain and strengthen the nervous system of the child growing in the womb. The food

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1 Vivekānanda Kēndra Patrikā, Madras, 1994; P. 86.

taken by the mother and the thoughts running in her mind have direct influence over the child and therefore stress is laid on purifying them. The next saṃskāra, the ceremony performed at birth, is the Jātakarma, the father welcoming the new-born child, praying for its long life, intelligence, wisdom and well being. This is performed before cutting the umbilical cord of the child.

When the child is eleven days old or on the tenth or twelfth day, the Nāmakaraṇam, the naming ceremony, is performed with vedic hymns. The custom of taking child out ceremoniously is 'Niṣkramaṇa' and it is performed from the twelfth day after the birth to the fourth month. In the sixth month comes Annaprāśanam, the first feeding with solid food, consecrated according to vedic rites. The Chūḍākarma or shaving of the head, is performed in the first or third year of the child, and the Kaṇavēdha, the ear boring ceremony, is performed in the fifth or seventh year. These saṃskāras connected to the child stage of life constantly harmonise and guard the young life. The sin (hereditary defect) arising from defect of seed and embryo is allayed.<sup>2</sup>

The child is to grow into a man- an individual, perfect in body, mind and intellect, an aspirant for a higher life and a perfect citizen. Man-making and nation building have been the twin goals of education in this holy land. When the mind of the child is preparent to receive education, the Vidhyārambha saṃskāra is performed to mark its beginning and alphabets are taught.

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2 एवमेतः शर्म याति बीजगर्भसमुद्भवम् ॥ या. स्मृ. 1-13.

The vidyārambha ceremony is performed when the child attains his fifth year. It consists in the child offering worship to deities, Viṣṇu, Laxmī and Saraswatī and also to the Vidyā cultivated by his family or ancestral learning, the sūtrakāras or the sages who have promulgated that learning and the vidyā or the subject of his choice. Worship is also offered to vināyaka, the family god and Bṛhaspati. The child is made to write on rice the phrases invoking the above gods and goddesses. The teacher makes the child read thrice what he has written. In ancient India, probably, this saṃskāra was performed with chaula or the tonsure ceremony. It is evidenced by the Uttara Ramacharita, where sage vālmīki started the education of Kuśa and Lava after their tonsure ceremonies and they had learnt many sciences before they commenced their vedic studies after the Upanayana.<sup>3</sup>

Upanayana is one of the important saṃskāras which aims at the transformation of an individual from an animalistic state into a responsible human being. Children at birth are a bundle of needs and wants. This is an animalistic state where they do nothing but eat and sleep at their will and pleasure. The mind, intellect and individuality are not developed in them. As there is no awareness of the individuality in the child, it does not feel the responsibility towards the family, community, society and the nation. Gradually, around the fifth year of the child, from this animalistic state, a self awareness or ego is developed in the child. At this juncture if proper guidance is given to mould the child's mind and intellect by impressing it with the positive values of life, this effort never goes

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3 Uttararāmacaritam: IV Act.

waste. The child learns to relate itself in a healthy way to the family, community, society and the nation at large.

In the Hindu home, every male child belonging to the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya varṇas, started his educational career with the observation of certain rites and rituals grouped under the name of this Upanayana saṁskāra. The Upanayana ceremony appears to have been of Indo-Iranian origin since we find in the Avesta mention of 'Aivyaonghen' identical with 'Kusti' worn by the parsis of the present time.<sup>4</sup> It was not a mere sacrament with the ancient Indians, but it signified the beginning of a new life - the life of the pupil. Dr. A. S. Altekar has pointed out that 'the ritual was originally performed when a student commenced his vedic education under the supervision of a teacher, with whom he usually lived. It was not an obligatory ritual; the evidence of the Dharmasūtras showed that down to c. 400 (200) B. C. there used to be occasionally some families in society where it was not performed for a generation or two. If a student was unfit by character or calibre to receive to vedic education, he was also not admitted to its privilege. If, on the other hand, during the course of his education he had to go to a different teacher, the ritual had to be repeated. Nay, it was felt that it should be performed again even in the case of married men, if they wanted to prosecute further studies under a new teacher. It was thus essentially an educational ritual and bore some resemblance to the formality of the admission procedure in modern schools and colleges'<sup>5</sup>. The observation is no doubt very interesting and it

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4 Social life of Ancient India by Dr. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya; Calcutta, 1965. P. 37.

5 A.S. Altekar : Education in Ancient India; Banaras; 1957; Pp. 291-2.

should be noted further that if married men had to perform it again at the beginning of their new study then it was not always the first of the four āśramas.

The continuing process of the 'Upanayana' is beautifully depicted in Taittirīya Upaniṣath:<sup>6</sup> आचार्यः पूर्वरूपम् । अन्तेवास्युत्तररूपम् । विद्या सन्धिः । प्रवचनः सन्धानम् । These mantras point out the importance of 'sandhānam' which sustains the continuing process of 'Upanayana'. By the means of mantradīkṣhā, the boy becomes an 'Upāsaka'. The initiate comes to realise many spiritual dimensions of living. The central idea behind 'Upanayana' is the proposal of a student and the acceptance of the teacher.

'Upanayana' is the beginning of 'Upāsana'. The teacher in this context is called 'Bramhavit', the knower of Bramha. 'Upāsana' is a life of oblations and meditations. For these, there must be the altar and object respectively. The adopt teacher adopts various methods of communication to make the subtle spiritual truths comprehensible to the developing mind of the disciple. In the Vēdas and Śāstras the 'Bramha' is presented as 'Savitha', the Sun and the 'Agni', the Fire. The Taittirīyōpaniṣath provides the meditations on Sun and the Fire as follows : अग्निः पूर्वरूपम् । आदित्य उत्तर रूपम् । आपः सन्धिः । वैद्युतः सन्धानम् ।<sup>7</sup> As a result of the meditation upon these objects the disciple gathers the 'lustre of Brahma'. These mantras also reveal why Sun and Fire are involved in the 'Upanayana'. The Sun ceases to be a mere material planet when the Sun is seen as the manifestation of

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6 Taittirīyōpaniṣath: Śikṣāvalli: III-5.

7 Taittirīyōpaniṣath: Śikṣāvalli: III-4.

‘Bramha’; so too the Fire ceases to be an elemental principle when invoked with the appropriate mantra. The initiate has to sing the ‘sāvitrī mantra’. The singing invokes the grace of Savitha which saves the singer from the cycle of the birth and the death. Hence it is ‘Gāyatrī’. Thus Upanayana is the begining of ‘Sāvitrī or Gāyatrī Upāsana’.

Yājñavalkya regards the reading of the Vēdas the highest object of the Upanayana: ‘The teacher, having initiated the pupil with the Mahāvyāhṛtis, should teach him Vēdas and the rules of conduct’.<sup>8</sup> According to Āpastamba and Bhāradvāja, the Upanayana was meant for learning: ‘Upanayana is the sacrament of a person desirous of learning’.<sup>9</sup> But in course of time the performance of the ritual and the Vratādēśa or the commandments for observing vows became the chief object and education a secondary one. Gautama was the first exponent of this school: ‘Being consecrated by forty-eight saṃskāras a man goes to the vicinity of Brahman and Ṛshis.’<sup>10</sup> According to Manu also the ritual purifies this life as well as the other.<sup>11</sup> Angirā also thinks that the saṃskāra properly performed produces Brāmhā hood.<sup>12</sup> When the Upanayana was an educational saṃskāra, the vratādēśa or the delivery of commandments by the initiator was a secondary performance, but when it become a bodily saṃskāra, the ritualistic significance rose into importance.

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8 उपनीय गुरुः शिष्यं महाव्याहृतिपूर्वकम् ।  
वेदमध्यापयेत् पश्चाच्छौचाचारांश्च शिक्षयेत् ॥

या. स्मृ. I-15.

9 उपनयनम् विद्यार्थस्य श्रुतितः संस्कारः ॥ आ. घ. सू. 1-1-9.

10 G.D. Sū. VIII-14.24

11 M.S. II:26

12 Quoted in V.M.S. Vol. I. P. 137

In the latest of its development, the Upanayana became a religious achievement (puruṣhārtha) bereft of any educational intention. Even the mad, the dumb, the deaf or otherwise disabled persons who were originally excluded<sup>13</sup> from the right of performing this saṃskāra were required to undergo the ceremony.<sup>14</sup>

The word 'Upanayana'<sup>15</sup> can be derived and explained in two ways: (1) Taking (the boy) near the Ācārya (2) the rite by which the boy is taken to the Ācārya. The first sense appears to have been the original one and when an extensive ritual came to be associated with Upanayana the second came to be the sense of the word. Such an ancient work as the Āpastamba Dharma sūtra (I. 1. 1. 19) says that Upanayana is a saṃskāra (purificatory rite) laid down by revelation for him who seeks learning (i.e.: it accepts the second explanation) or this sūtra may mean 'It is a saṃskāra brought about by imparting the Śruti (viz: Gāyatri mantra) to him who seeks learning. This would mean that Upanayana principally is Gāyatriyupadēśa (the imparting of the sacred Gāyatrī mantra). This appears to be suggested by the Vedic passage: 'he created the Brāhmaṇa with Gāyatri, the Kṣatriya

13 Śankha and Likhita quoted by Harihara on Pā. Gr. Sū. II-2.

14 तस्माच्च षण्डबधिर कुब्जवामनपङ्गुषु ।

जडगद्वदरोगार्तशुष्काङ्ग विकलाङ्गिषु ॥

मत्तोन्मत्तेषु मूकेषु शयनस्थे तिरिन्द्रिये ।

ध्वस्तपुंस्त्वेषु चैतेषु संस्काराः स्युर्यथोचितम् ।

Brahma Purāṇa quoted in V.M.S. Vol. I. P. 399.

15 तत्रोपनयन शब्दः कर्मनामधेयम्..... तच्च यौगिकमुद्भिदन्यायात् । योगश्च भावव्युत्पत्त्या करणव्युत्पत्त्या वेत्याह भारुचिः । स यथा उप समीपे आचार्यादीनां वटोर्नयनं प्रापणामुपनयनम् । समीपे आचार्यादीनां नीयते वटुर्येन तदुपनयनमिति वा ।.... तत्र च भावव्युत्पत्तिरेव साधीयसीति गम्यते । श्रौतार्थविधिसंभवात् ।

संस्कारप्रकाश - P. 334.

with Triṣṭubh, the Vaiśya with Jagatī',<sup>16</sup> and by Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra 'one should initiate Brāhmaṇa with Gāyatri'. Jaimini<sup>17</sup> also (in IV - 1. 32) propounds the view that Upanayana is a saṃskāra and has a seen result viz: thereby the boy is brought near the teacher for learning Vēda.

But later on when the mystic significance of the Upanayana increased, the idea of the second birth through the Gāyatrī mantra over shadowed the original idea of initiation for education. Manu says 'In the Vedic birth of the student, symbolized by wearing girdle made of Muñja-grass, Sāvitrī is the mother and the teacher the father'.<sup>18</sup> By many writers the saṃskāra itself is called 'The teaching of Sāvitrī'. Aparārka remarks on the word 'Upanayana' used by Yājñavalkya, 'By Upanayana is understood the establishment of connection between the pupil and Sāvitrī, which is performed by the teacher'.<sup>19</sup> In still later times the word 'Upanayana' was used only in the Physical sense, that is, taking the pupil near the teacher by his guardians. By the Upanayana saṃskāra was meant that rite through which the child was taken to the teacher.<sup>20</sup> One authority extends the meaning

16 गायत्र्या ब्राह्मणमसृजत त्रिष्टुभा राजन्यं जगत्या वैश्यं न केनाचिच्छन्दसा शूद्रमित्यसंस्कार्यो विज्ञायते ।

- वासिष्ठ IV. 3. Quoted by अपरार्क P. 23 who quoted यम 'न केनचित्समसृजच्छन्दसा तं प्रजापतिः ॥'

17 संस्कारस्य तदर्थत्वात् विद्यायां पुरुषश्रुतिः । जैमिनि VI. 1.35. विद्यायामेवैषा श्रुतिः (वसन्ते ब्राह्मणमुपनयति) । उपनयनस्य संस्कारस्य तदर्थत्वात् । विद्यार्थमुपाध्यायस्य समीपमानीयते नादृष्टार्थं नापि कटं कुह्यं वा कर्तुं । दृष्टार्थमेव सैषा विद्यायां पुरुषश्रुतिः । कथमवगम्यते । आचार्यकरणमेतदवगम्यते । कुतः आत्मनेपददर्शनात् । -शबर.

18 तत्र यद्ब्रह्मजन्मास्य मौञ्जीबन्धनचिह्नितम् ।

तत्रास्य माता सावित्री पितात्वाचार्य उच्यते ॥

M.S. II-170.

19 Aparārka on Yājñavalkya S. I-14.

20 उप समीपे आचार्यादीनां वटोर्नीतिर्नयनम् प्रापणमुपनयनम् । Bhāruci, quoted in V.M.S. Vol. I. P. 334.



of the word 'Upanayana' and does not restrict it in to the educational sense alone: 'The rite through which a man is initiated into the vows of the Guru the Vēdas, the restraints, observances and the vicinity of a God, is called Upanayana'<sup>21</sup> In the latest development of the saṃskāra its educational sense has departed altogether. The word 'Upanayana' is used in the sense of a ceremonial farce which is performed sometimes before the marriage of a twice born. For many of us it is a ceremony in which a boy is invested with the sacred thread. What a mockery of fate! The sacred thread as such is not mentioned in the Gṛhyasūtras. It was a later substitute for the upper garment which was put on at the time of a sacrifice.<sup>22</sup> One did not know that this insignificant decorative substitute would outweigh the original element of the saṃskāra. But when not education but a badge became the sign of regeneration, the Sacred Thread reigned supreme.

The earliest reference to this Upanayana ceremony seems to be in the Atharva Vēda, where the sun is described as a Brāhmaṇa student approaching his āchārya<sup>23</sup> (teacher) with

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21 गुरोर्ब्रतानां वेदस्य यमस्य नियमस्य च ।

देवतानां समीपं वा येनासौ नीयते वटुः ॥

Abhiyukta -Ibid.

22 यज्ञोपवीतं कुरुते सूत्रं वस्त्रं वाऽपि वा कुशरज्जुमेव ॥

Gō. Gr. Sū. 1-2-1.

तृतीयमुत्तरीयार्थी वस्त्रालाभे तदिष्यते ॥

Dēvala quoted in V.M.S. Vol. I. P. 415.

23 Ācārya is the word most often used in the Gṛhya Sūtras and other early literature (See e.g. Mān. Gr. Sū. 1-2.10; Aśva. Gr. Sū. 1.19.1 etc.) The smṛtis have used both Ācārya and Guru to denote the teacher (see e.g. Manu II-69; 140; 145; 191-218; 225-226 etc. Yāj. 1-15; 26; 33; 51 etc.) In Manu II -191, for instance, we have both the words Ācārya and Guru used

firewood and alms.<sup>24</sup> The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa describes a student named Uddālaka approaching his teacher with samidhs, and requesting him to be accepted as a brahmachārin for tuitions under him.<sup>25</sup> The Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad declares that such a request to the teacher by the student has to be preceded by the words ‘उपैम्यहं भवन्तम्’, i.e.: ‘I am approaching you, sir’.<sup>26</sup> The teacher inquires about the name, birth and family of the student, as Satyakāma Jābāla was asked when he approached Gautama Hāridramatā.<sup>27</sup> All these formalities, and many others, which we shall enumerate as we proceed, had to take place with the observance of due rites (vidhi), as was done by Śaunaka, for instance, when he approached Aṅgiras, to learn.<sup>28</sup>

The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa describes some of the rites thus: The Āchārya places his right hand upon the head of the pupil (śiṣya), thus symbolizing the imparting of the very core of his own personality to the pupil (तेन गर्भीभवति); and on the third night, such personal inner splendour (garbha) of the teacher is supposed to enter the very core of the pupil’s whole being; thereafter, on being taught the Sāvitrī Mantra, the pupil becomes a true Brāhmaṇa.<sup>29</sup>

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simultaneously to denote the same person. Other words denoting a teacher are adhyāpaka and Upādhyāya.

24 A.V. XI. 5.

25 Sat. Brā. XI - 4.1.9.

26 उपैम्यहं भवन्तमिति वाचा ह स्मैवपूर्वं उपयन्ति स होपायन कीर्त्योवास । बृ. उ. VI-2.7.

27 Chānd. Up. IV. 4.4.

28 Mund. Up. I 13.

29 Śata. Brā. XI. 5, 4,12. with Śata. Brā. XI.5, 4th Brāhmaṇa which gives a description of the rites of accepting a pupil by a teacher, cf. Sān. Gr. Sū.: II.1 ff: Āśva. Gr. Sū.: I-20; ff: Pāras.

The word Bramhacarya occurs in the Kaṭha,<sup>30</sup> Muṇḍaka,<sup>31</sup> Chāndōgya<sup>32</sup> and other Upaniṣads. The Chāndōgya and Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣads probably the oldest among the Upaniṣads, furnish very valuable information. That some ceremonies were required before a young boy was admitted as a student even in Upaniṣadic times is clear from the statement in the Chāndōgya<sup>33</sup> that when Aśvapati Kēkaya was approached by prācīnāsāla Aupamanyava and four others who carried fuel in their hands (like young student's) and who were grown-up householders and theologians 'he (Aśvapati) without submitting them to the rites of Upanayana began the discourse'.

In the most ancient times it is probable that the father himself always taught his son.<sup>34</sup> But it appears that from the times of the Taittirīya Samhitā and the Brāhmaṇas the student generally went to a guru and stayed in his house. The story of Nābhānēdiṣṭa, son of Manu, who was excluded from ancestral property at a partition made by his brothers, narrated in the Aitarēya Brāhmaṇa shows that he was a Bramhacāri staying with a teacher away from his father's place.<sup>35</sup> Uddālaka Āruṇi who was himself a profound philosopher

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Gṛ. Sū. II 2, 17 ff. etc.

30 Kaṭha Upa. 1.1.15.

31 Muṇḍaka. Upa. II-1.7.

32 Chāndogya Upa. VI-1.1.

33 ते हि समित्पाणयः पूर्वाह्णे प्रतिचक्रमिरे तान्हानुपनीयैवैतदुवाच ।

Chāndogya. Upa. V-II.7.

34 Vide बृह. उ. VI. 2.1. 'अनुशिष्टोन्वसि पित्रेत्योमिति होवाच ।' विश्वरूप on या. I. 15. remarks 'गुरुग्रहणं तु मुख्यं पितुरुपनेतृत्वमिति । तथा च श्रुतिः । तस्मात्पुत्रमनुशिष्टं लोक्यमाहुरिति । आचार्योपनयनं तु ब्राह्मणस्यानुकल्पः ॥

35 नाभानेदिष्टं वै मानवं ब्रह्मचर्यं वसन्तं भ्रातरो निरभजन् । सोऽब्रवीदेत्य किं मह्यमभाक्तेति । ऐ. ब्रा. 22. 9. This story occurs also in Tait. Sam. III. 1.9.5.

of Brahma asks his son Śvētakēṭū to enter upon brahmacharya and sends him to a teacher to learn the Vēdas.<sup>36</sup> The same Upaniṣad describes the āśrama of Brahmacharya 'dwelling as a Brahmachārī in the house of a teacher, mortifying his body in the house of his teacher till his end'.<sup>37</sup> Chāndōgya IV. 4. 4. shows that the teacher asked the pupil his gōtra (in order that he may address him by that name). The same Upaniṣad shows that the brahmachārī had to beg for food,<sup>38</sup> that he had to look after the fire of his teacher<sup>39</sup> and that he had to tend his cattle.<sup>40</sup> The period of studenthood was usually twelve,<sup>41</sup> though the Chāndōgya<sup>42</sup> speaks of Indra's brahmacharya for 101 years.

It appears from the above that originally Upanayana was a very simple matter. The would be student came to the teacher with a Samidh in his hand and told the teacher that he desired to enter the stage of studenthood and begged to be allowed to be a Brahmachārī living with the teacher. There were no elaborate ceremonies like those described in the gr̥hya sūtras.

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36 श्वेतकेतुर्हारीण्येय आस तं ह पितोवाच श्वेतकेतो वसब्रह्मचर्यं.... स ह द्वादशवर्ष उपेत्य चतुर्विंशति च वर्षः सर्वान्वेदानधीत्य महात्मना अनूचानमानी स्तब्ध एयाय तं ह पितोवाच श्वेतकेतो.... उत तमादेशमप्राक्ष्यः येनाश्रुतं श्रुतं भवति ।

Chān. Upa. VI :1.1.2.

37 Chān. Upa. II : 23.1. This refers to the Naiṣṭhika Brahmachārīn.

38 Chān. Upa. IV : 3.5.

39 Chān. Upa. IV : 10.1.2.

40 Chān. Upa. IV : 4.5.

41 Chān. Upa. II : 23.1 IV: 10.1 VI: 1.2

42 Chān. Upa. II : 23.1.

### CHAPTER III

#### UPANAYANA IN OTHER RELIGIONS

Initiation of young men takes place in different tribes and religions. Some savage tribes initiate their youths by tests of endurance. In certain communities girls are initiated by observing a temporary seclusion. A few tribes re-arrange the taboos for a young man when he enters the life. Mutilation of the body is another method of initiation in some wild tribes. The Mohammadans still initiate their young men by means of circumcision.<sup>1</sup> Baptism of christians is a sort of initiation. Comparison with the ancient Zoroastrian scriptures and the modern practices among the Parsis of India tend to show that Hindu Upanayana or initiation goes back to an Indo-Iranian Origin.<sup>2</sup> But that subject is outside the scope of this thesis. Confining ourselves to Islam and Christian, the two major non-Hindu religins of India, let us discuss that how Hindu initiation or Upanayana is similar to circumcision and Baptism and other sacraments of Mohammadans and Christians respectively.

To speak strictly in spiritual and metaphysical senses, there is no such ceremony absolutely equating the Hindu 'Upanayana' in Muslim tradition. What is called sunnat or circumcision is somehow equated with 'Upanayana'. Because in Hindu 'Upanayana' yellow

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1 Hindu Saṃskāras: Dr. R. B. Pandey, P. 111.

2 History of DharmaShastra: Vol. II; Part I, Dr. P. V. Kane: P. 269.

garment, dipped in turmeric water is prescribed to the boy and he is expected to wear to same coloured cloth for twelve years till he completes his education in the 'Gurukula' with an initiation that he may be favoured by 'Guru' represented by Jupiter, the planet that influences on education on the one hand, and he may be free from contagious diseases found in forest areas on the other; whereas in 'Sunnat' just a cloth is worn passing through the neck crossingly and there is no prescribed colour or method of wearing the cloth to signify anything.

In 'Sunnat' the foreskin of the male genital organ is to be cut off for the purpose of cleanliness so that no urine should remain there causing impurity while offering prayer and in this sense it has got religious importance. But here more importance is given to hygienical aspects such as avoiding certain diseases on the one hand and easy sexual intercourse on the other; and so in 'Sunnat' there is neither spiritual nor metaphysical aspect as found in the Hindu 'Upanayana'. And 'Sunnat' is not done ceremoniously also. The cutting off of the foreskin of the male genital organ is done either by one belonging to 'ossān' or 'ottān' family that practices this function traditionally or by a physician or a surgeon. Anyhow, 'Sunnat' is a must in Muslim community.

According to the available informations 'Sunnat' has been started from Hajarath Ibrahim Khalilulla belonging to the period somewhere between 2600 B. C. to 2400 B. C. In the Arab countries 'Sunnat' is done soon after the child is born. In India sometimes it

is delayed for three to six years and so on. Soon after the cure of the wound of circumcision the boy here distributes sweets to his friends and once again starts to go to mosque.

In Upanayana 'Vapanakriyā' - the ceremonial function of removing the hair leaving just a tuft on the crown of the head is a must. In Muslim tradition also the function of cutting the hair of every child, male or female, is observed necessarily on the seventh day after the birth of the child. Unlike what is found in Hindus, complete hair is to be cut off in Muslims. The parents, according to Muslim tradition, are expected to give gift of gold or silver equal to the weight of the child's hair removed. This function is called 'ākikā' in the 'Hadises' - the Muslim 'smṛtis'. The 'Hadises' also mention that the parents should give gift of two goats if it is a male child and one goat if it is a female child in this hair removal function. In the case of a Hindu male child a separate hair-removal ceremony called 'Cūḍākarma', tonsure function, in the third year is prescribed. But, yet, 'Vapanakriyā' is a constituent part of 'Upanayana'.

Unlike what is found in the 'Bramhōpadēśa' of Hindus, in Muslims initiation takes place on the very first day of the birth of the child, may be male or female. Here the initiator may be the child's father or mother or anybody else who is religiously pure. The initiation when uttered in the right ear is called 'ajan' or 'bāng' and when uttered in the left ear it is called 'khāmat'. The following are the sacred sentences initiated in the right ear:

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|--|--|
| 1. 'Allāho Akbar'  | - God is Great (uttered four times)  |
| 2. 'Aśahad allā ilāha illallā'                                   | - I swear that there is no other deity except the only supreme God. (uttered twice.) |
| 3. 'Aśahad anna mohammadur rasūlillā sallallāha alaihi vasallam' | - I swear that the 'pravādi' mohammad is the messenger of God. (uttered twice)       |
| 4. 'Hāyyālassala'  | - Do come for prayer (uttered twice)   |
| 5. 'Hāyyālalphalā'   | - Come (for prayer); here follows prosperity (uttered twice)                         |
| 6. 'Allāho Akbar'  | - God is great (uttered twice)   |
| 7. 'Lā ilāha illallā'  | - There is no other God except Allāha-the Supreme God. (uttered twice)               |

The same spells or sacred sentences are uttered in the left ear also; but, a sentence 'khaḍā khāmatassala' meaning 'stand for prayer' is added to them in the middle after the 5th sentence as told by Mr. Haji K. Ismail, the Imām of the mosque at Nāguru in Kundapura Talluk.

Children, mostly male ones, start to go to mosque for prayer as soon as they cross their infancy. They stand behind the Imām in line with elders. In forming lines there is no any distinction owing to age or social status. All are equal before God to whom the Muslims surrender themselves absolutely and therefore they are called 'Islamīs'. The great Kuran and the Hadises do not prohibit women from going to mosque; but in practice they are not usually seen visiting mosque since the very ancient period itself for the purpose of their own safety.

According to Mr. Haji Abdul Khader Usuff, a religious leader of Muslim community at Kundapura, the Muslim boys go to mosque five times in a day for 'namāj' which means



‘to offer prayer’ and ‘surrendering oneself’ as well to the single or Sole God, necessarily after seven years of their age and they learn ‘khiyām’ meaning standing straight (in a line), ‘rukū’ - that means bending their bodies by placing their hands on their thighs, ‘khāyadā’ which means sitting on their knees, ‘sajada’ meaning touching thier heads to the ground and ‘tasvōd’- reading the ‘āyats’ or spells prescribed. ‘Taśvōd’ starts with the first ‘sūra’ or hymn of the kurān ‘Al phātiha’ which has got seven ‘āyats’.

So in several aspects there are distant similarities in Hindu Upanayana and ‘Sunnat’ or circumcision of Muslims. Whereas Mouñjī Bandhana, Yajnōpavīta, Daṇḍa, Ajina, Mēkhala, Kuṇḍala, Tripuṇḍra Dhāraṇa etc. or the procedures having similarity with these are not found.

Baptism, confirmation, Holy communion and Eucharist of Christians are some of the sacraments having some common elements of Hindu Upanayana. The name Baptism is derived from the verb baptien/baptize which signifies ‘to immerse; to wash’. The sacrament brings the child into the family and the community. The child is supposed to be getting a personality of its own. In a way baptising is christening i.e.: initiating the God into the person. The rites to be done after death, formally differ from a baptised and a non-baptised child as Upanīta and unupanīta child in Hinduism. But of late the difference is warded off. Sprinkling of the holy water, reading Bible, prayer etc. are the rites observed during the sacrament.

The word confirmation means 'fixing deep', 'making sure'. This is the rite by which persons are admitted to full communion with the Divine Spirit.

Confirmation is a sacrament of the New Law by which grace of the Holy Spirit is given to the one baptised by anointing with chrism in the form of a cross on the forehead, the imposition of hand and saying the words ".....receive the seal of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the father." The effects of the sacrament are an increase of sanctifying grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit; a seal or character imparted on the soul, (so this sacrament may not be repeated) and a strengthening of actual grace so that the recipient is unable to profess the faith and fight against temptations. Bishop is the ordinary minister of confirmation, while the extraordinary minister is a priest to whom the power has been granted by office or by apostolic indult. It is the custom of the church to have each one confirmed, presented by a sponsor.

Pope Paul VI in his apostolic constitution on the sacrament of confirmation (Aug 15, 1971) emphasises that the sacrament of Baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist have a three fold effect and are constituted as sacraments of initiation. These make for a real embodiment into the mystical body of christ. 'The faithful already marked with the sacred seal of baptism and confirmation are through the reception of the Eucharist fully joined to the Body of christ.' (Po. 5)

The new code of Canon Law defines the sacrament in 6879 declaring: 'The sacrament of confirmation impresses a character and by it the baptised continuing on the path of

christian initiation are enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the church; it strengthens them and obliges them more firmly to be witnesses to christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith.'

Baptism evokes the spirit of God, while the first communion makes him the full member of the society. The earlier one brings him into the family with identity of name etc., while the later takes him to society and entrusts him a place in the community.

Holy communion is yet another sacrament performed at the seventh age of the child. Under the influence of the Jewish tradition seven became a holy number of christians. It is a spiriteral intercourse as it is termed. The person starts communicating with God. establishes a fellowship with Him. This is a sacrament commemorating the last supper of Jesus Christ as per his own instruction at his last supper.

This has a few similar elements of Hindu Upanayana Saṃskāra, initiating the devine spirit of Gāyatrī into the vaṭu to declare him a Bramhacārin. The child is supposed to get the reasoning ability generally at this age and so, initiating godly spirit is considered very important without which he would turn inhuman. It is through this sacrament a christian boy or a girl is admitted to the parish, the church community, the very base for a christian life from birth to death.

The Greek based word Eucharist corresponds to native English thanks giving. It comes via old French euchariste and later Latin eucharistia from Greek word meaning 'gratitude', 'show favour'; prayer and meditation plays an important role here.

The reinforcement component of Hindu Upanayana is seen in Upākarma. Confirmation is conceptually nearer to Upanayana and the first communion contains a number of ideas of initiation. No marriage is possible without confirmation, just as Hindu Saṃskāras speak of Upanayana before marriage for Dvijas.

Both Christianity and Hinduism insist on these initial sacraments. This is possibly because of the belief that a proper basic religious and value training goes a long way in building up a disciplined personality. Many ideas mentioned in Hindu sacraments are either seen more or less the same way or have taken shape in a different way in the sacraments of Christians and Muslims.

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## CHAPTER IV

### UPANAYANA SAṂSKĀRA: WOMEN AND ŚŪDRAS

An interesting question is whether women ever had Upanayana performed or whether they had to wear the Yajñōpavīta. There are a number of evidences which go to prove that in the early period at least Upanayana Saṁskāra was not denied to girls. Women used to receive vedic education. Some of them were even the authors of vedic hymns. They could recite vedic mantras as a matter of fact. Women both married and unmarried are seen offering vedic sacrifices. In the eighth maṇḍala of the Ṛgvēda, we find a maiden taking the shoot of the Sōma shrub while returning from her bath and straightaway offering it to Indra, when she reached home.<sup>1</sup>

In another place we find a lady named Viśvavāra, getting up early in the morning and starting the sacrifice all by herself.<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered that in the vedic age there were no images to worship and temples to visit. Offering sacrifice was the only popular and well established method of worshipping divine powers. Viśvavāra or Ghōṣā could not have been able to do this important vedic function if they were not initiated. In the early vedic period the duty of chanting musically the Sōma songs seems to have been

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1 क॒न्या ३ वा॑र॒वाय॑ती सोम॒मपि॑ सु॒ता वि॑दत् ।  
अस्तं॑ भ॒रन्त्य॑ ब्र॒वीदि॑न्द्राय सु॒नवै॑ त्वा श॒क्राय॑ सु॒नवै॑ त्वा ॥

Ṛgvēda, VIII, 91-1.

2 ए॒ति प्रा॑ ची॒ विश्व॑ वा॒रा न॑ मो॒भिर्दे॒वो ई॒ळाना॑ ह॒विषा॑ घृ॒ता ची॑ ॥

Ṛgvēda, V, 28-1.

usually performed by the wife.<sup>3</sup> Later on it came to be entrusted to a special class of male priests called Udgātr̥s. Women's participation in vedic sacrifices was a real and not a formal one then. They enjoyed the same religious privileges as their male counterparts.<sup>4</sup> If the husband for any reason was not available, the wife could offer the sacrifices all alone.

The epic Rāmāyaṇa possess a point in evidence. On the morning of Rama's 'Yauvarājyābhiṣēka', Kausalyā is seen performing all alone the Svastiyāga to ensure felicity to her son.<sup>5</sup>

Sītā is described as offering Sandhyā prayers, i.e. ritual prayers which are offered with mantras in the morning, noon and evening.<sup>6</sup>

It is needless to say that participation in sacrifices presupposed initiation and vedic study. A parallel evidence in support of girl's initiation ceremony can be cited here. It is said that the Parsis belonging to the Indo-Iranian family, perform 'Navjat' ritual which corresponds to Hindu Upanayana, with respect to girls as well, regularly even now.<sup>7</sup> The

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3 पत्नीकर्मैव एतेऽत्र कुर्वन्ति यदुद्गातारः ।

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, XIV, 3.1.35.

4 Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, VI, 5.3.1; III, 8.2.1-6.

5 सा क्षौमवसना देवी नित्यं व्रतपरायणा ।

अग्निं जुहोति स्म तदा मन्त्रवित्कृतमङ्गला ॥

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa: II. 20.15.

6 Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa: V. 15.48; Ayōdhyā kāṇḍa: 87-19; Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa: 14-48.

7 The position of women in Hindu Civilization: A.S. Altekar VII. P. 200.

vedic age held that Brahmacharya discipline and training was as much necessary for girls as it was for boys. The training helped the girls to become better wives and mothers.<sup>8</sup>

After their Upanayana women used to specialise in vedic theology and philosophy; some of the women figure among the authors of vedic hymns, the very reading of which was going to be prohibited to this sex by a later age. The Bṛhaddēvata of Śaunaka Maharṣi enumerates the female seers of the Ṛgvēda under the title 'Brahmavādīnyah'.<sup>9</sup> The list of twenty seven names includes some mythical figures such as Rātrī, Sūryā, Vāc etc. However there were women belonging to the human domain also. They are Apālā, Viśvavāra, Ghōṣā, Rōmaśā, Sikatā and others. These women are cited as the Ṛṣikas of some of the Ṛks found in the V, VIII, IX and X maṇḍalas of the Ṛgvēda.<sup>10</sup>

Here it may be pointed out with a right sense of pride that it is only in Hindu scriptures women figure and no other holy scripture has ever allowed the hymns of women to be included in it. This unique factor may also be a pointer to the vedic outlook. Further, the Gṛhya Sūtras of Āśvalāyana and Sāṅkhyāyana include three women in the list of Āchāryas (revered teachers) worthy of daily libations by a house holder. They are Gārgī Vācakanvī, Vadavā Prāthīyēyī and Sulabhā Maitrēyī. They receive a place of honour along with Sumantu, Paila, Vaiśampāyana and others. These ladies must have made real contributions

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8 ब्रह्मचर्येण कन्या युवानं विन्दते पतिम् ॥

Atharva vēda: XI. 5.18.

9 Bṛhaddēvata: II.84.

10 Ṛgvēda: V: 28; VIII: 91; IX: 81 and X: 39 & 40.

to the advance of scholarship; otherwise they would not have merited this daily respect. We know little about Gārgi Vācakanvī, who engages the sage Yājñavalkya in philosophical discussion, as found in Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad. Sulabhā episode is found in the Mahābhāratha. She teaches Sāṅkhya philosophy to king Janaka there.

The Mahābhāṣya uses a term Kāśakṛtsnāḥ, indicating ladies who specialised in the Pūrvamīmāṃsa work Kāśakṛtsnī composed by the sage Kāśakṛtsna. Pūrvamīmāṃsa as we all know deals with the practical aspects of vedic yāgas. How can we expect women to study such a technical branch of vedic lore, if they were not initiated?

The Mauñjībandhana ritual for brides which is observed even today in marriage ceremony of the Brahmins, may be a remnant of Upanayana alone to girls in an earlier age. The mauñji or mēkhalā with its three guṇas is taken to signify the three Vēdas encircling the wearer. Number of instances could be cited from Sanskrit literature in respect of Upanayana Saṃskāra given for girls. We have already noted the instance of Rāmāyaṇa, where Sītā is described as offering sandhyā. A vivid description of Pārvatī, wearing the Mauñji, observing asceticism, reading the vedic lore and offering Havis into Agni, found in Kumāra Sambhavam of Kālidāsa, is too well known.<sup>11</sup> Bāṇabhaṭṭa's works, both

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11 प्रतिक्षणं सा कृतरोमविक्रियां

व्रताय मौञ्जीं त्रिगुणां बभार याम् ।

Kumāra Sambhavam: V-10.

कृताभिषेकां हुतजातवेदसं

त्वगुत्तरासङ्गवतीमधीतिनीम् ।

Kumāra Sambhavam: V-16.



Harṣacaritam and Kādambarī hold evidence. In Harṣacaritam goddess Sarasvatī is mentioned as purified by the wearing of the Brahmasūtra.<sup>12</sup> In Kādambarī Mahāśvētā is described as sanctified by the holy thread.<sup>13</sup>

Authors like Hārīta, lay down that girls should be given Upanayana Saṃskāra and if some of them want to pursue higher studies they could do so without the ceremony of marriage intervening. He says: there were two classes of women, the Brahmvādinī, i.e.: those proficient in metaphysical knowledge which was a life-long pursuit for them and the Sadyōvadhū, i.e.: those who studied only till their marriage and preferred to lead the life of married housewife.<sup>14</sup> Yama says 'in former ages, tying of the girdle of muñja (i.e.: Upanayana) was desired in the case of women, they were taught the Vēdas and made to recite Sāvitrī (the sacred Gāyatrī verse); either their father, uncle or brother taught them and not a stranger and begging was prescribed for a woman in the house itself and she was not to wear deer-skin or bark garment and was not to have matted hair.'<sup>15</sup>

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12 विद्वन्मानसनिवासलयेन गुणकलापेनेवांसावलम्बिना ब्रह्मसूत्रेण पवित्रीकृतकाया....।

Harṣacaritam, P. 78.

13 अयुग्मलोचनसकाशात् प्रसादलब्धेन चूडामणिचन्द्रमयूखजालेनेव मण्डलीकृतेन ब्रह्मसूत्रेण पवित्रीकृतकायाम् ... ।

Kādambarī: P. 64.

14 अत एव हारीतेनोक्तम्: द्विविधाः स्त्रियः । ब्रह्मवादिन्यः सद्योवध्वश्च । तत्र ब्रह्मवादिनीनां उपनयनं अग्नीन्धनं वेदाध्ययनं स्वगृहे च भैक्षचर्येति । सद्योवधूनां तूपस्थिते विवाहे कथञ्चिदुपनयनं कृत्वा विवाहः कार्यः ।

Quoted in Saṃskāra Prakāśa: P. 402.

15 पुराकल्पे तु नारीणां मौञ्जीबन्धनमिष्यते ।

अध्यापनञ्च वेदानां सावित्रीवचनं तथा ॥

पिता पितृव्यो भ्राता वा नैनामध्यापयेत्परः ।

स्वगृहेचैव कन्याया भैक्षचर्या विधीयते ॥

Further it was apprehended that if the most important religious saṃskāra of Upanayana was not performed in the case of girls, women would be automatically reduced to the status of Śūdras. In such case, all marriages, excepting the marriage of a Śūdra, should be deemed as Anulōma vivāhas, resulting in Varṇasaṅkara. The logical consequence of this suggests a calamity almost. There cannot be any Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas or Vaiśyas, but only Śūdras. How could the Traivarnikas be born of Śūdra mother? -asks Hārīta.<sup>16</sup>

Having spoken of the Saṃskāras from Jātakarma to Upanayana, Manu winds up 'these ceremonies were to be performed in their entirety for women also, but without mantras'.<sup>17</sup> Again, for woman, the marriage ceremony is equivalent to the Upanayana or initiation ceremony of the boy; serving the husband is equivalent to serving the teacher, and residing in the husband's house and doing her household duties is equivalent to the daily sacrifices and worship of fire by man.<sup>18</sup> This shows that in the days of Manusmṛti, Upanayana for women had gone out of practice.

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वर्जयेदजिनं चीरं जटाघारणमेव च ॥

Saṃskāra Prakāśa: P. 402-403.

16 न हि शूद्रयोऽनौ ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियवैश्या जायन्ते ॥

Smṛti Candrika: XXI-20.

17 अमन्त्रिका तु कार्येयं स्त्रीणामवृद्धशेषतः ।

संस्कारार्थं शरीरस्य यथाकालं यथाक्रमम् ॥

Manu Smṛti, II-66.

18 वैवाहिको विधिः स्त्रीणां संस्कारो वैदिकः स्मृतः ।

पतिसेवा गुरौ वासो गृहार्थोऽग्नि परिक्रिया ॥

Manu Smṛti: II-67.

Let us discuss in short whether the Saṃskāras, such as Upanayana have any bearing on the members of the fourfold castes. The question of the position of the Śūdras, deserves special attention. According to Manu, the Śūdras are not fit for the Saṃskāras.<sup>19</sup> In the text of Laghu Viṣṇu it has been stated that Saṃskāras for Śūdra is offering of service to dvijas.<sup>20</sup> The Mitākṣara<sup>21</sup> is in favour of Śūdras performance of Vratas, but without hōma and muttering of mantras. The Śūdrakamalākara (p. 38) observes that Śūdras may observe vratas etc. without hōma and japa. Viśvarūpa<sup>22</sup> quotes the opinion of Śāṅkha who argues in favour of Śūdra's performance of the Saṃskāras, without vedic mantras. This has the support of Manu.<sup>23</sup> Vēdavyāsa<sup>24</sup> restricts the observance of certain Saṃskāras for the Śūdras, namely, Garbhādhāna, Puṃsavana, Sīmantōnnayana, Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Niṣkramaṇa, Annaprāśana, Caula, Karṇavēdha and Vivāha - these are directed to be performed without mantras. Haradatta in his commentary on Gautama Dharmasūtra II. 1. 51 has quoted from a Gṛhyasūtra which allows the following Saṃskāras for the Śūdras: Niṣēka, Puṃsavana, Sīmantōnnayana, Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Annaprāśana and Caula;

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19 न शूद्रे पातकं किञ्चिन्न च संस्कारमर्हति ।  
नाऽस्याधिकारो धर्मेऽस्ति न धर्मात्प्रतिषेधनम् ॥

Manu Smṛti : X - 126.

20 शूद्रश्चतुर्थो वर्णस्तु सर्वसंस्कारवर्जितः ।  
उक्तस्तस्य तु संस्कारो द्विजेष्व्वात्मनिवेदनम् ॥

Laghuviṣṇu Smṛti: 1-15.

21 On Yājñavalkya Smṛti: III: 262

22 On Yājñavalkya Smṛti: I-13.

23 X-127. Vide also Yama, quoted in the Smṛti Candrikā: I: P. 14.

24 I. 17.

but these also are to be performed under identical conditions.<sup>25</sup> In the Saṃskāra Prakāśa of mitramiśra a Gṛhyasūtra has been referred to where Saṃskāras from Garbhādhāna to Caula, seven in all, have been prescribed for the Śūdras.<sup>26</sup> The scope has been widened a bit, according to Aparārka.<sup>27</sup> The Smṛticandrikā (1. p. 24) takes a stricter view relying on the text of Brahma Purāṇa that vivāha is the only Saṃskāra for the Śūdras.<sup>28</sup> Kamalākara Bhatta remarks in his Nirṇayasindhu on the point that 'the conflicting views are to be reconciled by holding that 'the liberal ones apply to good (sat), Śūdras and the stricter ones to low (asat) Śūdras or that the rules are different in different countries.'<sup>29</sup> Kamalākara Bhatta in his Śūdrakamalākara refers to the sixteen types of Saṃskāras as stated by Vyāsa and has further observed that nine of them calculated up to Karṇavēdha are to be observed by the ladies and marriage of them should be performed with incantation, while for the Śūdras ten Saṃskāras are prescribed and that also without any mantra.<sup>30</sup> In the

25 शूद्रस्यापि निषेकपुंसवनसीमन्तोन्नयनजातकर्मनामकरणान्नप्राशनचौलान्यमन्त्रकाणि यथाकालमुपदिष्टानि ।  
विवाहोऽप्यमन्त्रको यथाचारं भवति ॥

26 वैजवापगृह्योऽपिः शूद्रस्यापि निषेक-पुंसवन-सीमन्तोन्नयन जातकर्मनामकरणान्नप्राशनचौलान्यमन्त्रकाणि  
यथाकालमुपदिष्टानीति ।

P. 133.

27 एतच्च चातुर्वर्ण्यमभिप्रायं न, द्विजातिमात्रविषयम् ।  
(The eight Saṃskāras). Aparārka: P. 25. (on Yājñavalkya: I.11-12.)

28 ब्राह्मे तु : विवाहमात्रसंस्कारं शूद्रोऽपि लभतात् सदा ॥ इत्युक्तम् ।

29 अत्र सदसच्छूद्रगोचरत्वेन देशभेदव्यवस्था ।

Nirṇayasindhu, III, Pūrvārdha.

30 व्यासोऽपि : गर्भाधानपुंसवनम्..... त्रेतायिसंग्रहश्चैव संस्काराः षोडश स्मृताः - इत्युक्ताः 'नवैता कर्णवेधान्ता मन्त्रवर्ज  
क्रियाः स्त्रियः । विवाहो मन्त्रतस्तस्याः शूद्रस्यामन्त्रको सदा ॥

Pp. 10-11.

Śūdrakamalākara, the opinion of Matsyapurāṇa has been quoted to show that for the Śūdras eleven Saṃskāras were prescribed.<sup>31</sup> According to Jayapāla Śūdras should have nine such Saṃskāras.<sup>32</sup> Śārṅgadharma allows twelve.<sup>33</sup>

From what has been discussed above it is clear that the Śāstrakāras were not very much sympathetic towards the Śūdras. They always tried to engage them in the service of the twiceborn castes.<sup>34</sup> They were denied the right of good food and clothing even.<sup>35</sup> But at a later stage when through this service to the dvijas, the livelihood of the Śūdras could not be maintained, the law makers under the pressure of circumstances were compelled, so to say to allow them to take to other means. Thus Śaṅkha allowed several arts and crafts to them (सर्व शिल्पानि चाप्यथ, 1-5). Yājñavalkya also has similar provisions.<sup>36</sup> Nārada relaxed the rules about Śūdra only in times of distress. Vijñānēśvara<sup>37</sup> allows agriculture as a means of livelihood for the Śūdras.

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31 शूद्राणां तु षडेते पञ्चमहायज्ञश्चेत्येकादश तेऽप्युक्तम् । रूपनारायण हरिहरभाष्ययोरप्येवम् । Ibid.: P. 11.

32 शूद्रस्योपनयनवर्ज्याः गर्भाधानादिविवाहान्ताः नव संस्कारा इति जयपालः । Ibid.: P. 11.

33 शूद्राणां द्वादशैव हि । Ibid.: P. 11.

34 प्रजापतिर्हि वर्णानां दासं शूद्रमकल्पयत् ।

Śānti Parva: 60-28; also Manu Smṛti X - 121-123.)

35 उच्छिष्टमन्नं दातव्यं जीर्णानि वसनानि च ।

पुलाकाश्चैव धान्यानां जीर्णाश्चैव परिच्छदाः ॥

Manu Smṛti: X-125.

36 शूद्रस्य द्विजशुश्रूषा तथा जीवन्वणिग्भवेत् ।

शिल्पैर्वा विविधैर्जीवेद्विजाति हितमाचरन् ॥

Yājñavalkya Smṛti: I-120.

37 तानि देवलोकानि.....शूद्रधर्मो द्विजातिशुश्रूषा.... कर्षणपशुपालनभारोद्धहनपण्यव्यवहारो....।

on Yājñavalkya Smṛti: I-120.

In the light of these texts we may also conclude that the Śāstrakāras allowed gradually certain Saṃskāras for the Śūdra but the utterances of vedic verses were in most cases prohibited.

After this detailed exposition of the topic one more question remains and that is 'Is Upanayana necessary for women and Śūdras now in this modern society?' Well, the significance of Upanayana, which was a religious sanction for vedic studies is lost now. Upanayana has become a meaningless formality even in case of boys, says Dr. Alteker.<sup>38</sup> Today times have changed. Old ideals of extreme asceticism have ceased to appeal. The stress today is neither on vedic studies nor on Sanskrit studies. Even the men, born in the Brahmin caste are not pursuing vedic studies seriously. Today even a great Sanskrit or Vedic scholar deems it a matter of great honour both for himself and his son, if the son gets a foreign scholarship. In such a context reinduction of Upanayana for a girl or Śūdra boy may be an unwanted and additional expenditure for the family. However this much can be said with least hesitation-when Upanayana Saṃskāra was really functional, when it actually opened the gateways for vedic learning and education in general, if it were continued for girls or Śūdras, our beloved motherland would have been blessed with more intelligent and more self respecting men and women and the number of ignorant and superstitious people would have been reduced to a large extent.

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38 The position of women in Hindu Civilization, Benares, 1938, Pp. 211.

## CHAPTER V

### COMPONENTS OF UPANAYANA SAMSKĀRA

Upanayana is one of the important saṃskāras which aims at the transformation of an individual from an animalistic state into a responsible human being.<sup>1</sup> Children at birth are a bundle of needs and wants. This is an animalistic state where they do nothing but eat and sleep at their will and pleasure. The mind, intellect and individuality are not developed in them. As there is no awareness of the individuality in the child, it does not feel the responsibility towards the family, community, society and the nation. Gradually, around the fifth year of the child, from this animalistic state, a self awareness or ego is developed in the child. At this juncture, if proper guidance is given to mould the child's mind and intellect by impressing it with the positive values of life, this effort never goes waste. The child learns to relate itself in a healthy way to the family, community, society and the nation at large.

Upanayana is the saṃskāra through which the child is introduced into Brahmacharyaśrama. He enters the Gurukula which is considered as a womb for being born a second time with a beautiful inner personality. The word Upanayana means (Upa = near + nayanam = leading to) leading the child to the Guru (teacher) who in turn leads the child to veda and the assimilation of vedic knowledge culminates in Param Brahma, in due course leading to the realization of Absolute Truth or the Ultimate Reality.<sup>2</sup>

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1 H.H. Swami Paramarthananda: Vivekananda Patrika, P. 79.

### The Age

Regarding the age of the pupil at which he is to commence his studies, there are differences of opinion among the Hindu Śāstrakaras. Some authorities, for instance lay down that the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya student should be initiated at the age of eight, eleven and twelve respectively.<sup>3</sup> Yājñavalkya adds that the Upanayana may also be carried out at any convenient time according to the family custom (yathākulam)<sup>4</sup> But it is advised by some of these that the students who desire to speed up their educational attainments should start their studies a little earlier: the Brāhmaṇa in the fifth year of his age, the Kṣatriya in the sixth, and the Vaiśya in the eighth.<sup>5</sup> The authorities concerned also laid down the minimum and maximum age limits in each case by saying that the Upanayana may be performed at any time between the eighth and sixteenth years of age for the Brāhmaṇa boy, between eleventh and twenty second for the Kṣatriya boy, and between twelfth and twenty fourth years for the Vaiśya.<sup>6</sup> Those who do not get initiated within the age limits as mentioned above, become Patita-Sāvitṛika, i.e. lose their right of learning the Sāvitṛī verse;<sup>7</sup> they become vrātyas, by thus losing this right; and such

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2 Ibid. P. 79.

3 Sān. Gr. Sū. II-1; I-9; Āśva. Gr. Sū. I-19; I-7; Pāra. Gr. Sū. II-5; 36-38; Gō. Gr. Sū. II-10; I-4; also in Smṛtis: Manu II-36; Yāj. I-14 etc.

4 Yāj. I-14; so again Pār. Gr. Sū. adds that Upanayana may also be performed at any time according as it is considered auspicious by different families: Pār. Gr. Sū. II-2; I-4.

5 Manu: II-37; Cf. Āp. I-1, 19-20; Gau. I-6.

6 Sān. Gr. Sū. II-1, I-9; Āś. Gr. Sū. I, 19;4-7; Pār. Gr. Sū. II-5-39; Gō. Gr. Sū. II-10-5.

7 Manu: II-39; Yāj. I-38.



individuals are censured by Āryas (आर्य विगहिताः).<sup>8</sup> The Śūdras were not to go in for learning according to these authorities.

From the difference in the respective ages prescribed for the three different varṇas, some writers have inferred that this emphasizes the supposed intellectual superiority of the Brāhmaṇa who was considered to be ready to begin the study at a younger age than his non-brāhmaṇa fellows. But an education scheme touches life at every point and is a practical philosophy of life, we shall be able to see that the real explanation of this distinction should lie in another direction altogether. Of the three varṇas, Brāhmaṇa's main duties centred round teaching and learning, according to the Hindu theory of varṇa. The Brāhmaṇa boy was supposed to have come of a family, the members of which adhered to their duties of teaching and learning; and therefore, it would be quite natural to expect a hereditary predisposition as well as environmental facilities for a Brāhmaṇa child to develop tendencies to learn earlier owing to his family and social surroundings than it could be for the Kṣatriya and Vaiśya children who were born and bred up in totally different surroundings. And, as to the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, the age when each of these is allowed to start studies is very nearby the same, which fact goes to support the above contention. Moreover, as the Brāhmaṇa's duties of life were centred around learning and teaching the earlier he started to learn, the better it would help him to become a master of as much knowledge as possible. Besides, he had also to spend a longer period in studenthood.

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8 Ibid.: Sec. Chap. VIII.

### The Time

The auspicious time was selected for the performance of Upanayana. Different seasons were meant for different castes.<sup>9</sup> The Upanayana of Brāhmaṇa was performed in spring, of a Kṣatriya in summer, of a Vaiśya in autumn and of a Rathakāra in the rainy season. As observed by Dr. R. B. Pandey these different seasons were symbolic of the temperament and occupation of different castes.<sup>10</sup> The moderation of spring symbolized the moderate life of a Brāhmaṇa; the heat of summer represented the fervour of a Kṣatriya; autumn, when the commercial life of ancient India reopened after the rainy season, suggested the wealth and prosperity of a Vaiśya; and the easy time of rains indicated facility for a chariot maker.

### Astrological Aspects

The later astrological works introduced very intricate rules about the proper months, tithis, days and times for Upanayana. It is neither possible nor very necessary to go into these astrological details. But a few words must be said as in accordance with these rules. Vṛddhagārgya<sup>11</sup> laid down that six months from Māgha were the proper months for Upanayana, while others say that five months from Māgha are the proper ones. Then 1st, 4th, 7th, 8th, 13th, 14th, 15th etc. (i.e. full and new moon) tithis are generally avoided. It

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9 वसन्ते ब्राह्मणमुपनयति । ग्रीष्मे राजन्यम् । शरदि वैश्यम् । वर्षासु रथकारमिति ॥

B. Gr. Sū.: II, 5-6.

10 Hindu Saṃskāras: P. 127.

11 मासानाह वृद्धगार्ग्यः । माघादिमासषट्के तु मेखला बन्धनं मतम् । Quoted in Saṃskāra Prakāśa, P. 355. तथा च ज्योतिःशास्त्रम् : माघादिषु च मासेषु मौञ्जी पञ्चसु शस्यते । एतच्च वर्णत्रयसाधारणम् । Smṛti Candrika: I, P. 27

is stated that Upanayana should not be performed when venus is not near the sun that it cannot be seen, when the sun is in the first degree of any zodiacal sign, on anadhyāya days and on galagraha.<sup>12</sup> Jupiter, venus, mars and mercury are respectively the presiding deities of the Ṛgvēda and the other vēdas.<sup>13</sup> Therefore the Upanayana of those who have to study these vēdas should be performed on the week days Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are the best; Sunday is middling, Monday is the least suitable, but Tuesday and Saturday are prohibited (except that for students of the Sāmavēda and Kṣatriyas Tuesday is allowed). Among the nakṣatras<sup>14</sup> the proper ones are Hasta, Citra, Svāti, Puṣya, Dhaniṣṭha, Aśvini, Mṛgaśiras, Punarvasu, Śravaṇa and Rēvati. There are other rules about nakṣatras with respect to those who follow a particular Vēda. One rule is that all nakṣatras except Bharāṇi, Kṛttika, Magha, Viśākha, Jyēṣṭha, Śatatāra are good for all. The Moon and Jupiter must be astrologically strong with reference to the boy's horoscope. The rule about Jupiter probably arose from the fact that Jupiter was supposed to rule over knowledge and happiness and as Upanayana was meant to be the entrance for Vēda study, Jupiter's benevolent aspect was thought to be necessary. If Jupiter and Venus are not to be seen owing to nearness to the Sun, Upanayana cannot be performed. Jupiter when in the 2nd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th zodiacal sign from the sign of birth is auspicious, when in the 1st, 3rd, 6th, 10th place from

12 नष्टे चन्द्रेऽस्तगे शुके नरंशे चैव भास्करे । कर्तव्यमौपनयनं नानध्याये गलग्रहे ।..... त्रयोदशीचतुष्कं तु सप्तम्यादित्रयं तथा । चतुर्थ्येकादशीप्रोक्ता अष्टावेते गलग्रहाः ॥ Smṛti Can. I, P. 27. Aparārka, P. 32. Cites the first as from Purāṇa.

13 गुरुर्भृगुसुतो धात्रीपुत्रः शशधरात्मकः । स्युरेते ऋग्यजुःसामाथर्वणामधिपाः क्रमात् ॥ Smṛti Cand. I, P. 27.}

14 हस्तात्रये पुष्यघनिष्ठयोश्च पौष्वाश्विनीसौम्यादितिविष्णुभेषु । शस्ते तिथौ चन्द्रबलोपयुक्ते कार्यो द्विजानामुपनायनो विधिः ॥

Aparārka, P. 32. Smṛti Cand. I, P. 27.

the sign of birth it is auspicious after the performance of a propitiatory homa and when it is in the 4th, 8th, 12th place from birth, it is inauspicious. The moon is supposed to be malefic when she is in the 2nd, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th or 12th place from the sign of birth. Four hours from Sunrise is the best for Upanayana, from that time to noon is middling and afternoon is prohibited. Some said that a person's Upanayana should not be performed in the month in which he was born, others restricted the prohibition to the Pakṣa (the half) of the month in which he was born. There are other rules about the lagna (the rising zodiacal sign at the time of Upanayana) which are not set out here. There are other prohibited astrological conjunctions like vyatīpāta, vaidhṛti &c. For detailed rules on these works like the Saṃskāra Prakāśa (Pp. 355-385), Nirṇaya Sindhu and Dharma Sindhu may be consulted.

### **The Garments (Ajina)**

A Brahmācāri had to wear two garments, one for the lower part of the body (vāsa) another for covering the upper part of the body (uttariya). Āpastamba says that 'the garment (vāsa) for a Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya or Vaiśya Brahmācāri is respectively to be made of hemp, flax and ajina (deer skin).<sup>15</sup> Some teachers prescribe that the lower garment should be of cotton but coloured reddish-yellow for Brāhmaṇas, dyed with madder for Kṣatriyas, dyed with turmeric for Vaiśyas. Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra<sup>16</sup> and Manu<sup>17</sup> speak of 'Āvika' (made of wool) for Vaiśya instead of 'ajina'. Vasiṣṭha says<sup>18</sup> that a Brāhmaṇa should wear a

15 वासः । शाण्णिकौमाजिनानि । काषायं चैके वस्त्रमुपदिशन्ति । माञ्जिष्ठं राजन्यस्य । हरिद्रं वैश्यस्य । Āpastamba Dha. Sū. 1.1.2.39-41; 1.1.3. 1-2.

16 ऐण्यमजिनमुत्तरीयं ब्राह्मणस्य रौरवं राजन्यस्याजं गव्यं वा वैश्यस्य सर्वेषां वा गव्यमसति प्रधानत्वात् । Pāraskara II. 5.

17 कार्ष्णीरौववस्तानि चर्माणि ब्रह्मचारिणः । वसीरन्नानुपूर्व्येण शाण्णिकौमाविकानि च ॥ Manu: II-41

(lower) garment which is white and unblemished (or new) and for a Kṣatriya or Vaiśya it should be the same as in Āpastamba Dharmasūtra, but for Vaiśya, Vasiṣṭha prescribes also one made of kuśa grass or he says that all should wear cotton cloth that is undyed. Gautama on the other hand says 'for all the lower garment may be made of hemp, flax or kuśa grass or of the hair of the mountainous goat (kutapa);<sup>19</sup> other teachers prescribe coloured garments, one coloured with the juice of trees for Brāhmaṇas and madder-red and yellow for Kṣatriya and Vaiśya. Āśvalāyana,<sup>20</sup> Pāraskara!<sup>21</sup> Vasiṣṭha,<sup>22</sup> and Baudhāyana<sup>23</sup> say that the upper garment for a Brāhmaṇa should be the skin of a black deer, for Kṣatriya the skin of ruru deer and for a Vaiśya of cow-skin or of goat skin. Baudhāyana and Āśvalāyana prescribe only goat skin. Pāraskara adds that if any one cannot secure a skin suited to one's varṇa, he may wear an upper garment of cow-hide as the cow is the chief among animals.<sup>24</sup> Baudhāyana prescribes the skin of black deer for all in the same circumstances.<sup>25</sup> Āpastamba gives the option to all varṇas to use a sheep skin (as upper garment) or a woolen plaid (kambala).<sup>26</sup> Āśvalāyana<sup>27</sup> appears to suggest that the lower

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18 शुक्लमहतं वासो ब्राह्मणस्य । माञ्जिष्ठं क्षत्रियस्य । हरिद्रं कौशेयं वा वैश्यस्य । सर्वेषां वा तान्तवमरक्तम् । Vasiṣṭha: XI, 64-67. what is Ahata is defined by Pracētas: ईषद्धौतं नवं श्वेतं सदशं यन्न धारितम् । अहतं तद्विजानीयात् सर्वकर्मसु पावनम् । Quoted in Smṛti Cand. I, P. 29.

19 Gautama Dha. Sū. I. 17-20.

20 Āśvalāyana Gr. Sū.: I, 19-18.

21 Pāraskara Gr. Sū.: II, 5

22 Vasiṣṭha Dha. Sū.: XI, 61-63.

23 Baudhāyana Gr. Sū.: II, 5-16.

24 Pāraskara Gr. Sū.: II. 5.

25 Baudhāyana Gr. Sū.: II, 5-16.

26 Āpastamba Dha. Sū.: I, 1.3. 7-8.

27 Āśvalāyana Gr. Sū.: I, 19, 8-9.

and upper garments may be of the same skin or that the lower garment may be white or coloured. The Kāthaka Gr̥hya Sūtra<sup>28</sup> says that the upper garment for the three varṇas should be respectively of the skins of black deer, tiger and ruru deer. A vestige of these rules survives in the modern practice of tying a small piece of deer skin to the yajñōpavīta of the boy when his Upanayana is performed.

According to Dr. R. B. Pandey<sup>29</sup> the skin was of a practical use in the forest life of early times. Because it was generally used by the hermits and ascetics, it began to gather sanctity round it. When it became connected with the religious ceremony, the writers on Dharma invested it with symbolism. The Gōpatha Brāhmaṇa says that the lovely deer skin was symbolical of holy lustre and intellectual and spiritual preeminence.<sup>30</sup> The student while putting it on, was reminded that he should attain the spiritual and intellectual position of a Ṛṣi.

### The Staff (Daṇḍa)

The staff, which the student is to hold, should be straight, unburnt, pleasing in appearance (सौम्यदर्शनम्), and not likely to create terror in any person (अनुद्वेगकरम्).<sup>31</sup> There is some divergence of view about the trees of which the staff was to be made. Āśvalāyana<sup>32</sup>

28 ऐणेयं चर्म ब्राह्मणाय प्रयच्छति वैयाघ्रं राजन्याय रौरवं वैश्याय । Kāṭaka Gr. Sū.: 41. 13

29 Hindu Saṃskāras, P. 134.

30 Gōpatha Brāhmaṇa: II. 4.

31 ऋजवस्ते तु सर्वे स्युरव्रणाः सौम्यदर्शनाः ।

अनुद्वेगकरा नृणां सत्त्वचोऽग्निदूषिताः ॥

Manu: II, 47.

32 Āśvalāyana Gr. Sū.: I. 19, 13 and I. 20:1.

says 'a staff of the palāśa wood for a Brāhmaṇa, of Udumbara for a Kṣatriya and of bilva for a Vaiśya or all the varṇas may employ a staff of any of these trees. Āpastamba<sup>33</sup> is of the opinion that the staff should be of palāśa wood for a brāhmaṇa, of the branch of the nyagrōdha tree for a Kṣatriya, of badara or udumbara wood for a Vaiśya; while some teachers say that the staff should be made of a tree (which is used in sacrifices) without reference to any varṇa. Gautama<sup>34</sup> and Baudhāyana<sup>35</sup> say that the staff of palāśa or bilva should be used for brāhmaṇa and Gautama<sup>36</sup> says that aśvattha and pīlu wood staff should be used respectively for Kṣatriya and Vaiśya or of any sacrificial tree for all varṇas. Baudhāyana Gṛhya sūtra prescribes nyagrōdha or rauhitaka for Kṣatriya and badara or udumbara for Vaiśya. Pāraskara Gṛhya sūtra<sup>37</sup> recommends a staff of palāśa, bilva and udumbara respectively for the three varṇas (or any of these for all). Kāṭhaka Gṛhya sūtra (41. 22) recommends palāśa, aśvattha and nyagrōdha respectively for the three. Manu<sup>38</sup> prescribes bilva and palāśa for brāhmaṇa, vaṭa and khadira for Kṣatriya, pīlu and udumbara for Vaiśya and Kullūka adds that two staffs should be used by the boy, as two are recommended in a compound.

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33 Āpastamba Gr. Sū.: II. 15-16.

34 Gauthama Dha. Sū.: I. 21.

35 Baudhāyana Dha. Sū.: II. 5.17.

36 Gauthama Dha. Sū.: I. 22-23.

37 Pāraskara Gr. Sū.: II. 5.

38 ब्राह्मणो वैल्वपालाशौ क्षत्रियो वाटखादिरौ ।

पैलवौदुम्बरौ वैश्यो दण्डानर्हन्ति धर्मतः ॥

Manu: II-45.

The length of the staff varied according to the varṇa of the boy. Āśvalāyana,<sup>39</sup> Gautama,<sup>40</sup> Vāsiṣṭha,<sup>41</sup> Pāraskara<sup>42</sup> and Manu<sup>43</sup> prescribe that in the case of the brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya or Vaiśya boy respectively the staff should be as high as his head, forehead or the tip of the nose. The Sāṅkhyāyana Gṛhya sūtra (II-1. 21-23, SBE vol.29, P. 260) on the other hand reverses this (the brāhmaṇa having the shortest staff and the Vaiśya the longest). The Sāṅkhyāyana Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 13. 2-3) prescribes that the Brahmacāri should not allow anyone to pass between himself and his staff and that if the staff, girdle or the Yajñōpavīta break or rend, he has to undergo a penance and that at the end of the period of Brahmacarya, he should sacrifice in water the Yajñōpavīta, staff, the girdle and the skin<sup>44</sup> with a mantra to Varuṇa (Rg. vee: 1. 24. 6) or with the sacred syllable 'Ōm'. Manu (II. 64) and Viṣṇu Dharmasūtra (27. 29) say the same thing.

The staff was required for support, for controlling the cattle of the teacher (which the student was to tend), for protection when going out at night and for guidance when entering a river or the like.<sup>45</sup> In some cases, even at present, all the rules relating the staff

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39 Āśvalāyana Gr. Sū.: I. 19-13.

40 Gauthama Dha. Sū.: I.25.

41 Vāsiṣṭha Dha. Sū.: XI. 55-57.

42 Pāraskara Gr. Sū.: II.5.

43 केशान्तिको ब्राह्मणस्य दण्डः कार्यः प्रमाणतः ।

ललाटसंमितो राज्ञः स्यात्तु नासान्तिको विशः ॥

Manu: II-46.

44 उपवीतं च दण्डे बध्नाति । तदप्येतत् । यज्ञोपवीतं दण्डं च मेखलामजिनं तथा । जुहुयादप्सु व्रते पूर्णं वारुण्यर्चा रसेन ।

Sāṅkhyāyana Gr. Sū.: II. 30.30. रस means 'ओम्'.

45 तत्र दण्डस्य कार्यमवलम्बनं गवादिनिवारणं तमोवगाहनमप्सु प्रवेशनमित्यादि । Aparārka.



are respected, but in the majority of cases a very poor or nominal substitute for the staff is presented to the student. The reason is that, now-a-days, it has no practical utility, the initiate not being expected to go outside his home to a hermitage in the forest.

### The Girdle (Mēkhalā)

Gautama,<sup>46</sup> Āśvalāyana,<sup>47</sup> Baudhāyana,<sup>48</sup> Manu<sup>49</sup> Bhāradvāja<sup>50</sup> and others prescribe that a girdle made of muñja grass should be tied round a brāhmaṇa boy's waist, one made of mūrva grass (which is used for making a bow string) for a Kṣatriya and one of hemp cords for a Vaiśya. Pāraskara says that the string of a bow should be used for a Kṣatriya and mūrva grass for a Vaiśya and adds that in the absence of these the girdle should respectively be made of kuśa, āśmantaka and balvaja grass (for Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya). Manu (II. 42-43) gives the same rules as Pāraskara.<sup>51</sup> Āpastamba<sup>52</sup> allows a girdle of muñja grass with an iron piece intertwined in it for Kṣatriyas and woolen string or the yoke-string or a string of tamāla bark for Vaiśyas (according to some). Baudhāyana<sup>53</sup>

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46 Gauthama Dha. Sū.: I.15.

47 Āśvalāyana Gr. Sū.: I. 19-11.

48 Baudhāyana Gr. Sū.: II. 5.13.

49 मौञ्जी त्रिवृत्समा श्लक्ष्णा कार्या विप्रस्य मेखला ।  
क्षत्रियस्य तु मौर्वी ज्या वैश्यस्य शणतान्तवी ॥

Manu: II-42.

50 Bhāradvāja Gr. Sū.: I. 2.

51 Pāraskara Gr. Sū.: II. 5. 21-24.

52 ज्या राजन्यस्य मौञ्जी वायोमिश्रा । आवी सूत्रं वैश्यस्य । सैरी तामली वेत्येके । Āpastamba Dha. Sū.: I. 1-2. 34-37.

तामल is explained as शण (hemp) in the commentary on गोभिल II. 10.10 and by हरदत्त as 'तामलो मूलोदकसंज्ञो वृक्षः । तस्यत्वचा ग्रथिता तामली ।'

53 Baudhāyana Gr. Sū.: II. 5.13.

allows mauñjī girdle also to all. Some of the sūtras (e. g. Baudhā. Gr-sū, Āpastamba. Dha. sū.) further prescribe that the girdle of muñja grass should have three strings to it and the grass should have its ends turned to the right and the knot of the girdle should be brought near the navel. Manu (II-43) says that there may be one knot or three or five (according to family usage, says Kullūka). The number of knots was probably regulated by the number of the pravara sages invoked by a person.

The girdle was originally meant to support the Kaupīna. But, later on, it was turned to serve as a religious symbolism. It was made of triple cord which symbolised that the student was always encircled by the three Vēdas<sup>54</sup>

### **The Sacred thread: (Yajñōpavīta)**

The equipment of Brahmacāri is completed by the Yajñōpavīta or a sacred thread to be worn by him. A few words must be said on the history of Yajñōpavīta from ancient times. Among the earliest references is one from the Taittirīya Saṁhita:<sup>55</sup> ‘the nivīta is (used in actions) for men, the prācīnāvīta (is used in rites) for pitṛs, the upavīta (in rites) for gods; he wears it in the upavīta mode (i.e.: slung from the left shoulder), thereby he makes a distinguishing sign of the gods’. In the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa,<sup>56</sup> we read wearing in the prācīnāvīta form he offers towards the south; for in the case of pitṛs, acts are

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54 वेदत्रयेणावृतोऽहमिति मन्येत स द्विजः ॥ Āśvalāyana quoted in V.M.S. Vol. I P. 452.

55 निवीतं मनुष्याणां प्राचीनावीतं पितृणामुपवीतं देवानाम् । उपव्ययते देवलक्ष्ममेव तत्कुरुते ॥ Taittirīya Sam. II. 5.11.1.

56 दक्षिणतः प्राचीनावीती निर्वपति । दक्षिणावृद्धिं पितृणाम् । अनादृत्य तत् । उत्तरत एवोपवीय निर्वपेत् । उभये हि देवाश्च पितरश्चेज्यन्ते । अथो यदेव दक्षिणार्धेधिभ्रयति तेन दक्षिणावृत् । Taittirīya Brāhm. 1.6.8.

performed towards the south. Disregarding that one should wear in the Upavīta from and offer in the north only, since both gods and pitṛs are worshipped (in this rite). The three words nivīta, pracīnāvīta and upavīta are explained in the Gōbhila Gṛhya sūtra,<sup>57</sup> which says 'raising his right arm, putting the head into (the upavīta) he suspends (the cord) over his left shoulder in such a way that it hang down on his right side; thus he becomes Yajñōpavītin. Passing his left arm, putting the head (into the upavīta) he suspends it over his right shoulder, so that it hangs down along his left side; in this way he becomes pracīnāvītin; a person becomes pracīnāvītin only in the sacrifice offered to the manes'. The occasions when nivīta mode is used are: 'Ṛṣi Tarpaṇa, sexual intercourse, saṃskāras of one's children except when hōma is to be performed, answering the calls of nature, carrying a corpse and whatever other actions are meant only for men; nivīta is what hangs from the neck.'<sup>58</sup>

The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa<sup>59</sup> says "the gods being yajñōpavītins approached near, bending their right knee; he (prajāpati) said to them 'the sacrifice is your food, immortality is your strength, the sun is your light'; then the pitṛs approached him, being pracīnāvītins

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57 दक्षिणं बाहुमुद्धृत्य शिरोऽवधाय सव्येसे प्रतिष्ठापयति दक्षिणं कक्षमन्ववलम्बं भवत्येवं यज्ञोपवीती भवति । सव्यं बाहुमुद्धृत्य शिरोवधाय दक्षिणेसे प्रतिष्ठापयति सव्यं कक्षमन्ववलम्बं भवत्येवं प्राचीनावीती भवति । पितृयज्ञेतेव प्राचीनावीती भवति । Gōbhila Gṛ. Sū. I. 2.2-4.

58 अथ निवीतिकायाणि ऋषीणां तर्पणं व्यवायः प्रजासंस्कारोऽन्यत्र होमात्, मूत्रपुरीषोत्सर्गः प्रेतोद्धनं यानि चान्यानि मनुष्यकार्याणि कण्ठेऽवसक्तं निवीतमिति । Baudhāyana Gṛhya Paribhāṣā Sūtram, II. 2.3 and 6.

59 ततो देवा यज्ञोपवीतिनो भूत्वा दक्षिणं जान्वाच्योपासीदस्तान्ब्रवीद्यज्ञो वोऽन्नममृतत्वं व ऊर्ग्वः सूर्यो वो ज्योतिरिति । अथैनं पितरः प्राचीनावीतिनः सव्यं जान्वाच्य ..... अथैनं मनुष्याः प्रावृता उपस्थं कृत्वोपासीदन् ॥ Śatapatha Brāhm. II. 4.2.1.

and bending their left knee and then men approached him covered with a garment and bending their bodies...." etc. It is important to note here that men are said to have been covered only with a garment and there is no reference in their case to any mode of wearing either as Yajñōpavīta or nivīta or prācīnāvīta. This rather suggests that men wore only garments when approaching gods and not necessarily a cord of threads. In the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa<sup>60</sup> it is said that when vāk (speech) appeared to Dēvabhāga Gautama he put on the Yajñōpavīta and fell down with the words 'namō namaḥ.'

It seems to follow from a passage in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka that a strip of black antelope skin or of cloth was used in ancient times as upavīta.<sup>61</sup> 'The sacrifice of him who wears the Yajñōpavīta becomes spread out (prosperous, famous), while the sacrifice of him who does not wear it does not spread; whatever a brāhmaṇa studies, wearing a Yajñōpavīta, he really (therein) performs a sacrifice. Therefore one should study, sacrifice or officiate at a sacrifice with the Yajñōpavīta on for securing the spreading of sacrifice: having worn an antelope skin or a garment on the right side, he raises the right hand and keeps the left down; this is Yajñōpavīta; when this position is reversed it is prācīnāvīta: the position called samvīta is for man.' It is remarkable that here at any rate no cord of

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60 एतावति ह गौतमः यज्ञोपवीतं कृत्वा अधो निपपात नमो नम इति । Taittirīya Brāhm. III. 10.9. Sāyaṇa remarks 'स्वकीयेन वस्त्रेण यज्ञोपवीतं कृत्वा'.

61 अजिनं वासो वा दक्षिणत उपवीय दक्षिणं बाहुमुद्धरतेऽवधत्ते सव्यमिति यज्ञोपवीतयेतदेव विपरीतं प्राचीनावीतं संवीतं मानुषम् ॥ Taittirīya Āraṇyaka II.1.

threads is meant by upavīta, but only a piece of skin or cloth. The Parāśara Mādhavīya<sup>62</sup> quotes a portion of the above passage and remarks that the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka lays down that a man becomes an upavītin by wearing one of the two, viz: antelope skin and (cotton) garment.

Some of the sūtrakāras and commentators drop hints that garments were used or could be used as upavīta. Āpastamba<sup>63</sup> says that a householder should always wear an upper garment and then adds 'or the sacred thread may serve the purpose of an upper garment.' This shows that originally upavīta meant an upper garment and not merely a cord of threads. In another place the same sūtra says<sup>64</sup> one (who partakes of śrāddha dinner) should eat covered with an upper garment slung over the left shoulder and passing under the right arm'. Haradatta gives two explanations of this, viz: that one should wear an upper garment (while dining at a śrāddha) like a Yajñōpavīta i.e.: under the right arm and over the left shoulder, that is, a brāhmaṇa cannot rely on Āpastamba Dharma sūtra II 2-4-23 and wear at śrāddha repast only the sacred thread (but he must wear the garment in that fashion) and give up the sacred thread for the time. While another view is that he must wear the sacred thread and the upper garment both in the fashion of upavīta. Āpastamba<sup>65</sup> prescribes that when a student wears two garments he should wear one of them (i.e.: the

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62 तत्रैतिकर्तव्यतारूपेण कृष्णाजिनवाससोरन्यतरेणोपवीतित्वं तैत्तिरीयके विधीयते ॥

Parāśara Mādhavīya I. 1. Pa. 173.

63 Āpastamba Dha. Sū. II. 2.4. 22-23.

64 Āpastamba Dha. Sū. II. 8.19.12.

65 Āpastamba Dha. Sū. II. 1.2.6. 18-19.

upper one in the Yajñōpavīta mode, but when he wears only one garment then he should wear it round the lower part of the body (and should cover the upper body with a portion of the garment though it may be long enough for that). Āpastamba Dharma sūtra (1. 5. 15. 1.) prescribes that a man must be yajñōpavītin at the time of waiting upon teachers, elders, guests, at the time of hōma, in japa (uttering prayer), at meals and in taking ācamana and at the time of daily vedic study. On this Haradatta says ‘Yajñōpavīta means a particular mode of wearing the (upper) garment; if one has no upper garment, then there is another (but inferior) mode stated in Āpa. Dha. Sū II. 2. 4. 23 and that at other times it is not necessary to have the Yajñōpavīta.’

The Gōbhila Gr̥hya Sūtra<sup>66</sup> in treating of Upanayana says ‘the student takes as Yajñōpavīta a cord of threads, a garment or a rope of kuśa grass.’ This indicates that though a cord of threads was considered in Gōbhila’s days as the appropriate Yajñōpavīta, that was not an invariable rule in his day and that a garment could be employed instead. The commentator being brought up in the latter day tradition explains by saying that if the sūtra was lost in a forest then a garment may be worn like the sacred thread and if even that was lost a rope of kuśa. But this appears to be rather far-fetched as an explanation of Gōbhila’s unqualified words. Manu (II. 44) says that ‘the upavīta of a brāhmaṇa should be made of cotton, its strands should be twined with the right hand moved over them (or

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66 यज्ञोपवीतं कुरुते वस्त्रं वापि वा कुशारज्जुमेव ॥ Gōbhila Gr. Sū.: I. 2.1. सूत्रमपि वस्त्राभावाद्देदितव्यमिति । अपि वाससा यज्ञोपवीतार्थान् कुर्यात्तदभावे त्रिवृता सूत्रेणेति ऋष्यशृङ्गस्मरणात् । Smṛti Cand. I. P. 32.

the twist of the strands must be upwards) and it should have three threads'. Mēdhātithi comments on this that 'upavīta' means a particular mode of wearing a garment or a particular position of it and therefore here by upavīta is meant that which can be worn in that mode. The Smṛti Candrika quotes a prose passage from Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, 'or one may carry out all the purposes for which Yajñōpavīta is required by means of a garment and in its absence by a string of three threads'.

From the above passages, from the fact that many of the Gṛhyasūtras are entirely silent about the giving or wearing of the sacred thread in Upanayana and from the fact that no mantra<sup>67</sup> is cited from the Vedic literature for the act of giving the Yajñōpavīta (which is now the centre of the Upanayana rites), while scores of vedic mantras are cited for the several component parts of the ceremony of Upanayana, it is most probable, if not certain, that sacred thread was not invariably used in the older times as in the times of the later smṛtis and in modern times, that originally the upper garment was used in various positions for certain acts, that it could be laid aside altogether in the most ancient times and that the cord of threads came to be used first as an option and later on exclusively for the upper garment as observed by Dr. P. V. Kane.<sup>68</sup>

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67 The mantra 'यज्ञोपवितं परमं ..... ' &c. is cited only in Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 5. 7.8.) and in Vaikhānasa Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 5.) has certainly a comparatively modern ring about it and is not cited in any well known ancient work.

68 History of Dharmaśāstra, P. 281.

A few rules about Yajñōpavīta may now be stated here. The cotton cords should be worn by the Brāhmaṇa, woollen by the Kṣatriya and linen by the Vaiśya.<sup>69</sup> But the option of cotton cords is found for all.<sup>70</sup> It seems that it was due to the convenience of getting cotton threads. The sacred thread was of different colour according to different castes; the Brāhmaṇa wore white, the Kṣatriyas red and the Vaiśyas yellow. It is said that it corresponds with the colour of the mind of the above castes. But the differentiation was afterwards removed and at present the Vaiśya colour, yellow has been adopted universally.

The sacred thread is spun by a virgin Brahmin girl and twisted by a Brahmaṇa. It is to have three threads of nine strands well twisted. The nine dēvates of nine tantus (strides) are given by Dēvala viz: Ōṅkāra, Agni, Nāga, Sōma, Pitṛ, Prajāpati, Vāyu, Sūrya and all gods.<sup>71</sup> In it as many knots are made as there are pravara among the ancestors of the wearer. The composition of the sacred thread is full of symbolism and significance. Its length is ninety six times as the breadth of the four fingers of a man, which is equal to

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69 कार्पासमुपवीतं स्याद्विप्रस्योर्ध्ववृत्तं त्रिवृत् ।

शणसूत्रमयं राज्ञो वैश्यस्याविकसौत्रिकम् ॥

Manu. II. 44.

70 कार्पासञ्चोपवीतं सर्वेषामिति ।

Paṭhinasi; quoted in VMS. Vol. I. P. 415.

71 ओंकारः प्रथमस्तन्तुर्द्वितीयोऽग्निस्तथैव च ।

तृतीयो नागदैवत्याश्चतुर्थो सोमदैवतः ॥

पञ्चमः पितृदैवत्यः षष्ठश्चैव प्रजापतिः ।

सप्तमो वायुदैवत्यः सूर्यश्चाष्टम एव च ॥

नवमः सर्वदैवत्य इत्येते नवतन्तवः ॥

Smṛti Cand. I. P. 31.



his height. Each of the four fingers represents one of the four states the soul of a man experiences from time to time, namely, waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep and absolute Brāhmanhood. The three folds of the cord are also symbolical. They represent the three Guṇas, reality, passion and darkness, out of which the whole universe is evolved. The care is taken that the twist of the thread must be upward. It was done, so that the sattvagūṇa or the good quality of reality may predominate in a man, and so he may attain spiritual merits. The three cords remind the wearer that he has to pay off the three debts he owes to the ancient seers, the ancestors and the gods. The three cords are tied together by a knot called Brahmagranthi, which symbolises Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Besides, extra knots are made in the cords to indicate the various pravaraś of a particular family. A house-holder is given privilege to wear two, one for himself and one for his wife. A Brahmācāri can put on only one set of the Sacred Thread.

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## CHAPTER VI

### SIGNIFICANCE OF GĀYATRĪ

Every religion has a salient mantra, such as ‘Kalams’ in Islam, ‘Navakara’ in Jainism, ‘Mani Padme Hum’ in Buddhism. Similarly, the Gāyatrī mantra is considered to be the supreme mantra of the Hindu faith.

There are many Ṛks common to one or more of the Vēdas occurring with slight modifications; but Gāyatrī is the only Ṛk that is found unchanged in all the four Vēdas. This indicates the hoary antiquity of the Gāyatrī mantra, which would have been the common heritage of all the seers long before the Vēdas were completed in the present form. The mantra - the perception of the seer Viśvāmitra, son of Gādhi - appears in the tenth Ṛk in the 62nd sūkta of the Third Maṇḍala of the Ṛgvēda. It is on the deity Savitr, the creative solar Godhead and runs as follows:

‘तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥’ We contemplate that esteemed (longed for) refulgence (glory) of the divine Savitr, who may inspire our intellects (or actions).

It is remarkable that generation after generation, people have been reciting this Ṛk as a prayer. It is still more remarkable that the prayer has not been asking for cattle, horses, wealth or any worldly goods but for the splendour of the Divine which confers the highest consciousness and knowledge. The mantra addresses the ‘Radiance issuing from the Supreme Source in which is massed all the creative movement of the uncreate; that is, the

ultimate root for all movement in the creation. Let that light motivate and energise our thought-movements' is the soul filling prayer of the aspiring man.

There is a remarkable consensus in the Hindu tradition regarding the sanctity of the Gāyatrī mantra. Manu declares that Gāyatrī is the quintessence of the three Vēdas. As picturesquely depicted in the Manu smṛti, the Supreme Lord milked the three pādas (units of eight syllables) from each of three Vēdas, making up the 24 syllabled mantra here called the Sāvitrī, as it is addressed to the vedic diety Savitr.<sup>1</sup>

Gāyatrī is the name of a vedic metre. There are innumerable mantras in this metre in the Ṛgvēda why this particular verse commencing तत्सवितुः' should have been singled out for its unique distinction is really an enigma. The ordinary criteria of importance are of no help here.

There are over 10000 mantras in the Ṛgvēda grouped into hymns (sūktas) addressed to various deities. The largest number of hymns is addressed to Indra. Next come Agni, Sōma and the Aśvins. By numerical standards Savitr is a minor deity, with only about a dozen hymns exclusively addressed to him. Strange to say, the celebrated Gāyatrī mantra does not occur in any one of them. It is to be found in a hymn addressed to a miscellany

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1 त्रिभ्य एव तु वेदेभ्यः पादं पादमद्बुद्धत् ।  
तदित्युचोऽस्याः सावित्र्याः परमेष्ठी प्रजापतिः ॥

Manu: II-77.

of deities (viśvê dēvas). Why then this obscure mantra should be so highly praised is a mystery.

The reasons are somewhat subtle (sūkṣma) and we can at best only make a guess at them. According to the Vēdas, the stuff of divinity is one and one only, which can manifest in a multiplicity of forms - like ornaments made from gold. The Gods are not distinct from each other. Further divinity is primarily symbolised by light. (The word 'dēva' comes from the root 'Div' which means both to 'shine' and to 'play') Since the visible source of all light and energy is the Sun, it is preeminently suitable as the basis of contemplation. Hence the vedic dictum 'असावादित्यो ब्रम्हा' (the sun is the visible Brahma). Savitr̥ is a name of the sun in this aspect as the impeller - the hidden source of power behind the physical sun, and his function persists even when the sun is not shining. Thus a verse from the R̥gvēda declares so 'अन्धे तमसि ज्योतिर्विदत्' -he knows the light amidst the blinding darkness. He is the source of all impulsion. In particular he impels or stimulates the worshipper's higher intelligence (Dhī) which brings him knowledge, both mundane and transcendental. What the eye is to the body, that intelligence (Dhī) is to the mind. In its utmost reach it is designated pratibhā about which the Yōga sūtra says - 'प्रतिभा वा सर्वम्' - through this all siddhis are achieved. Men need pray for nothing else.

This tradition is continued in classical Hinduism. Thus Ādi Śaṅkara specifically makes out in his commentary on the Chāndōgya Upaniṣad that Savitr̥ is to be praised as

the practical efficacy dwelling in all acts of sacrifice, and as the first of the devotional efforts of all beings, through which they obviously live.

All this is at one level. Savitṛ has a crucial role to play on a somewhat higher plane. The world of experience envisaged in the Vēda is a unity amidst diversity. It is Savitṛ who is the link between the two. Hints and suggestions of this are found scattered through out the Vēda but the clearest statement of this is to be seen in the Shvētaśvatarōpaniṣad (chapter - II), where seven out of the total of 17 verses deal with Savitṛ. The mantras introduce the theme which, rendered freely mean: 'Intending first to yoke the mind to the quest of categorical truth (tattva), Savitṛ extracted the light from Agni's heat and manifested it on the earth. The point to be noted is that Agni symbolised the world of vedic experience and activity. His light stands for his essence (Jyōti). It is no other than Savitṛ himself - the means and the end.'

On the next level, Savitṛ leads to the convergence of mind and faculties which is the condition precedent enlightenment and to the attainment of philosophical truth (Tattva Jñāna). Enlightenment is a transition from the unknown to the known, from darkness to light. It is a border phenomenon occurring at the junction (Sandhi) of the two regions of experience. All the experience is made up of apparently antithetical but in reality co-operating principles, known as Dvandvas. Their meeting ground is a sandhi. It is this that is concretely symbolised by Sandhyā, the two light periods of morning and evening, when day passes into night and night into day.

This is the most suitable time for invoking Savitr using the Gāyatrī mantra, which is imbedded in an elaborate context of mantras, known as Sandhyāvandana. It is entirely in keeping with Hindu thinking that the period itself is revered as a deity, apart from the content of the Sandhyāvandana and addressed as Mahādēvī, as Saraswatī and as the embodiment of the letters of the alphabet (Sarvavarṇa). She is the personification of the complex mosaic of vitality of which the Gāyatrī is the heart.

As the mediator, the specific role of Savitr is that of synthesiser of antithesis (i.e. of the dvandvas), in particular of light and darkness, in each of which Savitr has a foot, as it were. In Hindu thought light and darkness are not contridictories, but corelatives; hence the possibility of reconciling them. More specifically the light which the supreme principle represents does not set. By its light, all other lights shine (तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति). Primarily the locus of this light is in the Buddhi. The core of the Gāyatrī meditation is the realisation of the identity of the light of the sun and the light of intelligence. It is this flashpoint of realisation which makes Gāyatrī to be extolled as the mother of the Vēdas. It is like the acorn which contains in itself the potentiality of the mighty oak tree of the future.

When we speak of Buddhi, we are, of course, not thinking of it in its unregenerate condition. Buddhi is capable of cultivation and refinement. The Gīta calls this process 'vyavasāya' and stresses that the one pointed (ēkāgra) Buddhi is the master key to all sādhana. In one sense, it may be said that buddhi is the axis on which the classical philosophical systems revolve.

The buddhi also finds mythological and symbolic expression in the Purāṇas. That is why the celebrated Dēvi Bhāgavat purāṇa opens with an invocation to the word mother in a verse coached in the Gāyatrī metre which is a striking paraphrase of the vedic Gāyatrī: 'सर्वं चैतन्य रूपां तां आद्यां विद्यां च धीमहि । बुद्धिं यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥' – we meditate on her who is the all-pervading conscious energy, the primaeval one (Ādyā) who is identical with the Supreme Knowledge (vidyā) in order that she may stimulate our intellect (Buddhi).

The familiar verse (Dhyāna ślōka) in the Sandhyāvandana commencing, 'मुक्ताविद्रुम हेमनील...' pictures Gāyatrī as a Goddess with five faces, each with its own symbolic colour and ten hands, each pair carrying weapons traditionally associated with the five major deities: Viṣṇu, Śiva, Dēvi, Gaṇapati and Sūrya. The composite figure stands for the synthesis of the five forms of worship (pañcāyatanōpāsana) in the first instance and then for the repeatedly five fold ingredients which make up the universe (prapañca). Among them may be named the vital axes (pañca prāṇas), their subtle counter parts (pañca Tanmātras), the five organs of sense (pañca Jñānēndriyas) and so on. The greatness of Gāyatrī lies in the fact that it symbolises the unified field of all awareness (sarva samanvaya).

Further, the Tantrics have developed the concept of Gāyatrī Dēvi and have ascribed this vedic mantra of Sūrya Savitr, seen by the sage Viśvāmitra, to Gāyatrī Dēvī. There are similar traditions. The vedic Ṛk, 'जातवेदसे....' to the Deity Agni, ascribed to Durgā is an instance in point. The Sandhyāvandanam a ritual based on the Tantric principle of arghya (oblation), mārjana (wiping), tarpaṇa (libation) and Japa as now known would have been

originally a simple method of invoking Gāyatrī. The Japa of Gāyatrī would have been the main feature in this worship.

There have been later accretions mainly from two concepts, one considering savitr as the physical sun and the other identifying the entity in the solar orbit, though said to be 'विरिञ्चिनारायणशंकरात्मन्', with Viṣṇu. So we find Tarpaṇa to the nine planets, salutations to the four quarters and to Yama, Son of the Sun-God as well as nyāsa on the body with the 12 aspects of Viṣṇu, Kēśava etc. and prayers addressed to Nārāyaṇa, featured in the worship.

In the Tantric lore, Gāyatrī mantra occupies a very high place. It is the mother of the Vēdas, the seed from which all the other mantras have sprung. To such extent that it is said that Japa of any mantra will yield fruit only if it is raised on a secure foundation of Gāyatrī japa. To prove the Greatness of the mantra, it has to be equated with Gāyatrī. The worshippers of the Divine mother, in the form of SriVidyā, say that the mantra of 15 letters, pañcadaśī, consisting of three parts can be equated to three Gāyatrīs.

The Gāyatrī mantra has 24 syllables signifying the meaning of the Absolute. Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa is a magnum opus of 24000 ślōkas (verses); Vyāsa's Mahābhārata is a classical work of 24000 ślōkas. Similarly Sri Aurobindo's 'Sāvitrī' is an immortal poem of 24000 lines. Thus Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa, Vyāsa's Mahābhārata and Aurobindo's Sāvitrī are resonant with the song of light of 24 syllables of Gāyatrī mantra.



Being a vedic Ṛk the mantra has to be recited audibly; not loudly, not mentally, but Upāmsū japa (lip movement) is prescribed. Bhūḥ, Bhuvah, Svaḥ represent the three planes of physical, vital and mental, the three states, jāgrat, swapna, suṣupti, the wakeful, the dream and the sleep states of consciousness. Similarly, Ōm which is composed of अ, उ and म denotes the triple principle in creation. When Gāyatrī is used for prāṇāyāma it has to be with seven vyāhrtis and the Gāyatrī Śīras. (vide Śāṅkha smṛiti XIII-12)

The text is: 'ॐ भूः ॐ भुवः ॐ सुवः, ॐ महः, ॐ जनः, ॐ तपः, ॐ सत्यम्, ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धिमहि । धियो योनः प्रचोदयात् । ॐ आपो ज्योति रसोऽमृतं ब्रह्म भूर्भुवस्सुवरोम् ॥

Here the seven vyāhrtis are the seven worlds, the seven planes of consciousness, the lower and the higher three with the link being the world of light, mahas. (see Appendix 1: meditation of Gāyatrī and Gāyatrī chart)

Like a benign mother, the Gāyatrī mantra protects its votaries from all sins and afflictions. As the benign mother of Vēdas, it increases devotion and discrimination, expanding one's heart and intellect. As the embodiment of Brahmacarya and Brahmanidyā it bestows brahmavarcas or brahmic effulgence. Finally it takes one across the ocean of worldly life by imparting knowledge and liberation. Thus the Gāyatrī mantra is worthy of all adoration and consideration.

In Manu smṛiti it has been said, 'The father and mother have given birth to him from mutual desire; so that he is born from the womb, let this be known as his physical birth.

But that birth which is given, according to the ordinance through savitr, by the preceptor who has mastered the Vēdas, that is the true birth, the unaging and immortal'.<sup>2</sup>

With the initiation of Gāyatrī during Upanayana which literally means 'leading near', a person gets new birth. Sāvitrī is considered to be his mother<sup>3</sup> and every year on the day of the Upākarma in the month of śrāvaṇa, he renews his pledge to lay himself open always to the Divine Splendour to activate his thoughts. The sacred Gāyatrī verse was imparted in very ancient times to the student by the teacher a year, or six months, 24, 12 or 3 days after Upanayana and that the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa prescribes that in the case of brāhmaṇa students this must be done immediately.<sup>4</sup> This ancient rule was probably due to the fact that the students in those far-off times when they came to the teacher at the age of seven or eight had hardly any previous instruction and so must have found it difficult to pronounce properly and correctly the sacred verse immediately on initiation. It is for this reason that so modern a work as the Samskāra Ratna Māla says that such mantras as 'शं नो देवीरभिष्टये'

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- 2 कामान्माता पिता चैनं यदुत्पादयतो मिथः ।  
संभूतिं तस्य तां विद्याद्यद्योनावभिजायते ॥  
आचार्यस्त्वस्य यां जातिं विधिवद्वेदपारगः ।  
उत्पादयति सावित्र्या सा सत्या सा जरामरा ।

Manu: II, 147-148.

- 3 तत्रास्य माता सावित्री ।

Manu: II - 170.

- 4 अथास्मै सावित्रीमन्वाह । तां ह स्मैतां पुरा संवत्सरेऽन्वहुः ..... । अथ षट्सु मासेषु.... । अथ चतुर्विंशत्यहे अथ द्वादशाहे ..... । अथ त्र्यहे । तदपि श्लोको भवति । आचार्यो गार्भी..... ब्राह्मण इति । सद्यो ह वा त्वाव ब्राह्मणायानुब्रूयादाग्नेयो वै ब्राह्मणः ।

Śatapatha Brāhm. : XI: 5.4.1-17.

(Rig. Vê: X-9. 4) which have to be repeated by the brahmacārī in the rites of Upanayana should be taught to him even before Upanayana, just as the wife (who being a woman had no Upanayana performed) was taught to vedic mantras accompanying such acts as that of examining ājya in sacrifices.<sup>5</sup> The same rule of postponing the instruction in Gāyatrī is stated in Śāṅkhyāyana Gṛhya sūtra<sup>6</sup> Mānava Gṛhya sūtra,<sup>7</sup> Bhāradvāja Gṛhya sūtra<sup>8</sup> and Pāraskara Gṛhya sūtra<sup>9</sup> The general practice however seems to have been to impart the Gāyatrī that very day.

Some Gṛhya sūtras prescribe the same verse 'तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम्' for all students, whether Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas or Vaiśyas. But others say that for Brāhmaṇa the Sāvitrī verse is the Gāyatrī, but for Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, a Sāvitrī (verse addressed to Savitr) in the Triṣṭubh (having 11 syllables in each quarter) or Jagatī (12 syllables in each quarter) should be the proper one. Here again there is difference. According to the commentators on the Kāṭhaka Gṛhya sūtra (41. 20), the verse 'अदब्धेभ्यः सविता' (Kāṭhakam IV. 10) and the verse 'विश्वा रूपाणि' (Kāṭhakam XVI. 8) are cited as Sāvitrī for a Kṣatriya and a Vaiśya respectively; while the commentator on Śāṅkhyāyana Gṛhya sūtra (II. 5. 4-6) says that the Triṣṭubh which is to be taught as the Sāvitrī to the Kṣatriya students is 'आकृष्णेन रजसा' (Rg.

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5 ब्रह्मचारिकर्तृकक्रियाकरणीभूतमन्त्राणां शंनोदेवीरित्येवमादीनामुपनयनात्प्रागेव शिक्षणं कर्तव्यं सूत्रवृत्तिकृदभ्य-  
नुज्ञानत्वात् । पत्न्या यथाऽवेक्षणादि मन्त्राणाम् ।

Samskāra Ratnamāla: P. 194.

6 Śān. Gr. Sū.: II-5.

7 Mānava Gr. Sū.: I. 22.15.

8 Bhāradvāja Gr. Sū.: I-9.

9 Pāraskara Gr. Sū.: II-3.

Vēda I. 35.2) and the Jagatī Sāvitrī for the Vaiśya is 'हिरण्य पाणिः सविता' (Rg Vē: I. 35.9) or 'हंसः शुचिषत्' (Rg. Vē. IV. 40.5). According to the Vārāha Gr̥hya sūtra 'देवो याति सविता' and 'युञ्जते मनः' (Rg. Vē. V. 81.1) are the Triṣṭubh and Jagatī meant as Sāvitrī for the Kṣatriya and Vaiśya respectively. According to Śatapatha quoted in the Madana Pārijāta (p. 23) the verse 'देव सवितः' (Tai. Sam. 1.7.7.1, Kāṭhaka Sam. XIII. 14) is the Sāvitrī for the Kṣatriya. According to Mēdhātithi or Manu Smṛ II. 38 'आकृष्णेन' (Rg. Vē. 1.35.2) and 'विश्वारूपाणि' (Kāṭhakam XVI. 8) are the two Sāvitrīs respectively for Kṣatriya and Vaiśya. That all these rules about the Sāvitrī being in the Gāyatrī, Triṣṭubh and Jagatī metres for the three varṇas respectively are probably very ancient follows from the text - 'गायत्र्या ब्राम्हणमसृजत त्रिष्टुभा राजन्यम् जगत्या वैश्यम्' etc.<sup>10</sup> The Āśvalāyana Gr̥hya sūtra, Āpastamba Gr̥hya sūtra and some other sūtras are entirely silent on the point while Pāraskara Gr̥hya sūtra II. 3 allows an option viz: all varṇas may learn the Gāyatrī or the Sāvitrī verses in the Gāyatrī, Triṣṭubh and Jagatī respectively.<sup>11</sup>

The Gōpatha Brāhmaṇa (I. 32. 33) explains the Gāyatrī in various ways. In the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka it is stated that the mystic words 'bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ, svaḥ' are the truth (essence) of speech and that savitā in the Gāyatrī means 'one who engenders glory'.<sup>12</sup>

10 Vāśiṣṭha Dhar. Sū.: IV. 3 quoted by Aparārka P. 23. who quotes Yama 'न केनचित्समसृजच्छन्दसा तं प्रजापतिः'

11 गायत्री ब्राह्मणायानुब्रूयादाग्नेयो वै ब्राह्मण इति श्रुतेस्त्रिष्टुभं राजन्यस्य जगती वैश्यस्य सर्वेषां वा गायत्रीम् । पार. गृ. II. 3.

12 त्रीनेव प्रायुङ्क्त भूर्भुवःसुवरित्याहैतद्वै वाचः सत्यं तत्प्रायुङ्क्त । अथ सावित्रीं गायत्रीं त्रिरन्वाह पच्छोऽर्धचर्चशोऽनवानं सविता श्रियः प्रसविता । (अनवानं means 'without stopping or break'.)

-Tai. Āraṇyaka, II. 11.

Atharvavēda calls it Vēdamātā and prays that it may confer long life, glory, children, cattle &c. on the singer.<sup>13</sup> The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad<sup>14</sup> contains a sublime eulogy of Gāyatrī which word is there derived from 'Gaya' means 'Prāṇa', and the root 'traī' to save and it is said that when the teacher repeats the Gāyatrī for the benefit of the young student he thereby saves the boy's life (from the ignorance and the effects of sin). The Āpastamba Dharma sūtra<sup>15</sup> mentions a brāhmaṇa text to the effect that the Sāvitrī is recited for all the Vēdas (i.e. by its recital all Vēdas become recited as it is their essence). Manu Smṛti (II. 77-83), Viṣṇu Dharma sūtra (55. 11-17), Śaṅkha smṛti (XII), Samvarta (verses 216-233), Bṛhat Parāśara (chap. V) and numerous other works contain eulogies of Gāyatrī. Its fame was probably due to its grand simplicity and to its adoptability to an idealistic conception of the world as emanating from an all-pervading intelligence.

Manu (II-104) and others prescribe that every day a Brahmacāri (as well as others) must perform Japa of Gāyatrī. Baudhāyana<sup>16</sup> prescribes that in the evening sandhyā adoration one should utter the Gāyatrī a thousand times, or a hundred times with prāṇāyāma each time or ten times with 'Ōm' and seven vyāhrtis. Vaśiṣṭa Dharma sūtra<sup>17</sup> prescribes

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13 स्तुता मया वरदा वेदमाता प्रचोदयन्तां पावमानी द्विजानाम् ।

आयुः प्राणं प्रजां पशुं कीर्तिं द्रविणं ब्रह्मवर्चसम् मह्यं दत्त्वा व्रजत ब्रह्मलोकम् ॥ Atharva Vēda: 19-71-1.

14 सा हैषा गयास्तत्रे प्राणा वै गयास्तत्प्राणास्तत्रे तद्यत् गायान्तत्रे तस्माद्गायत्री नाम स यामेवामूं सावित्रीमन्वाहैषैव सा स यस्मा अन्वाह तस्य प्राणास्त्रायते ।

Bṛ. Upa. V. 14.4.

15 Āpa. Dharma Sū.: I. 1-1-10.

16 Baudhā. Dhar. Sū.: II. 4.7.9.

17 Vaśi. Dhar. Sū.: 26.15.

that a man desirous of purifying himself from sin should repeat the divine Gāyatrī 1000 times (daily) as the maximum or 100 times (as the middle way) or at least 10 times. There are mantras for invoking the Gāyatrī and for taking leave of it.<sup>18</sup>

Could the head of a public sector institution send Deepāvali greeting cards to the company's customers containing the Gāyatrī mantra? This question came up for scrutiny in a writ petition filed in the Madras High Court recently as reported by a daily news paper 'Hindu'.<sup>19</sup> Dismissing the petition filed by the Dravida Kazhagam, the court upheld the action of the (then) Chairman of united India Insurance company, Madras in sending Deepāvali greeting cards in 1983 to some of the customers containing the Gāyatrī mantra in Sanskrit and an English translation explaining its significance.

Mr. Justice D. Raju said: 'The Gāyatrī mantra is said to be 'Shabda brahma' and it appears in the R̥gvēda and is said to be the key to vedic wisdom. It will be anachronistic for anyone to contend that it signifies or relates to any particular religion. The Vēdas have always been considered to be belonging to all mankind and are not limited to any particular religion, race, caste or community'.

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18 The आवाहनमन्त्र according to गोभिल is आयाहि वरदे देवि अक्षरे ब्रह्मवादिनि । गायत्रीं घन्दसां मातर्ब्रह्मयोने नमोस्तु ते ॥ quoted in स्मृतिचन्द्रिका (I P. 143) and the विसर्जनमन्त्र is उत्तरे शिखरे जाता भूम्यां पर्वत वासिनि । ब्रह्मणा समनुज्ञाते गच्छदेवि यथासुखम् ॥ quoted in the गृहस्थरत्नाकर P. 241. The स्मृतिचन्द्रिका (I. P. 151.) quoted from गोभिल 'महेश्वरमुखोत्पन्ना विष्णोर्हृदयसंभवा । ब्रह्मणा....यथेच्छया ।' and also 'उत्तमे शिखरे जाते' &c. These are recited in the modern Sandhyā also.

19 'The Hindu' - Daily: Madras; January 18, 1991.

The Judge said the argument that the Gāyatrī mantra was the previlage of Brahmins was basically fallacious. 'There is nothing on record to demonstrate that the Gāyatrī mantra is the exclusive previlage or property of any class or race or community. Even ancient texts and scriptures will belie such blasphemous claims, if any of any vested interests, saints and philosophers of world repute who stood above the barriers of religion had commended the recitation and chanting of the mantra'.

Mr. Justice Raju said, 'The Vēdas constitute mysticism, the perennial philosophy of spirituality and a practical guide for human conduct and have their aim to make the man divine. He said secularism did not mean irreligion or anything anty-religious. It implied that the state did not identify itself with any particular religion but should give equal treatment to all religions. The petitioner's contention proceeded on the assumption that the secularism meant that state must not associate itself with religion at all. Neither the founding fathers of the constitution nor any of the provisions could be imputed with having done away with the philosophical and spiritual ideologies and high values of life, the core of Indian polity and culture'

A close scrutiny of the contents of the greeting cards showed no involvement of religious tenets nor did they constitute any teaching or propagation and preaching of any religion in the sense of undermining secularism, the Judge said and dismissed the petition. This incident and the valuable dictum of the Hon. Judge upholds the universality and relevance of Gāyatrī in this modern society.

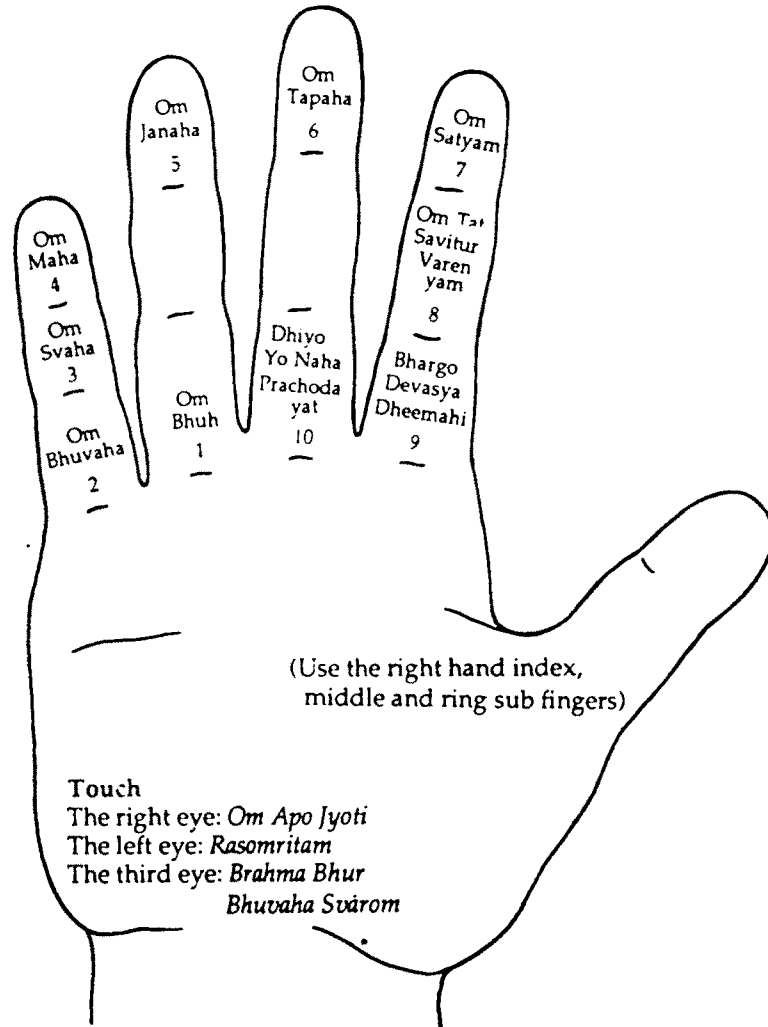
Out of the grace and power of Gāyatrī, many great souls have evolved, including Sri Swami Vivekānanda, Swami Dayānanda, Swami Ramatīrtha, Lōkamānya Tilak, Sri Arobindo, Pandith Madan Mohan Mālaviya and others. Such illumined beings belong to the spiritual symphony of the universe, whose heads and hearts were united. Such spirituality of light emanating from Gāyatrī should be formed the world over for spreading the luminous message of peace, joy and wisdom in every nook and corner of the world.

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## Appendix I.

### Kriyā for opening of the Third Eye.



The author recommends that chanting of this mantra with the kriyas (as shown here and explained) is extremely efficacious for sādhakas wishing to progress quickly. The procedure is:

- i) Chant the mantra with the kriyās three times
- ii) Chant the mantra seven more times without the kriyā.

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From: 'Gāyatrī - The Highest Meditation' by Sadguru Sant Keshavadas.

## Appendix II



### MEDITATION ON GĀYATRĪ

Morning Mantra

उद्यदादित्यसङ्काशां पुस्तकाक्षकरां स्मरेत् ।

कृष्णाजिनधरां ब्राह्मीं ध्यायेत् तारकितेऽम्बरे ॥

Refulgent red as the rising sun, book and rosary in hand, the Brahmic force, in deerhide clad, such form think ye, while stars still shine.



Midday Mantra

शुक्लां शुक्लाम्बरधरां वृषासनकृताश्रयाम् ।  
त्रिनेत्रां वरदां पाशां शूलं च नृकरोटिकाम् ॥

White hues, in snow white garment clad, seated on the Bull, of Might.  
Three eyed, with boon and bond in hand, with lance and drum armed.



Evening Mantra

श्यामवर्णा चतुर्बाहुं शङ्खचक्रलसत्कराम् ।  
गदापद्मकरां देवीं सूर्यासनकृताश्रयाम् ॥

Azure-coloured and four armed, conch and discus in each hand. club and lotus holding Goddess, seated in the solar orb.

## CHAPTER VII

### PROCEEDINGS OF UPANAYANA: RITUALS & CEREMONIES

The elaborate rituals and ceremonies, centering round the Upanayana have a great social significance which is worth noting in this connection. They create an atmosphere of dignity and seriousness about the particular occasion. It has been pointed out that the primitive tribes also had noted the social importance of ceremonials of which they took advantage when they initiated their young folk in the art of archery or hunting.<sup>1</sup> Speaking of the elaborate ceremonials of this nature, Dr. Nunn observes: 'The value of these consists not in themselves, but in what they symbolise. In brief, their biological utility lies in their power of arousing in actors and spectators, as often as they are repeated, states of feeling and emotion that are frequently of great social importance'.<sup>2</sup> Both of them feel the weight and importance of the particular duties and responsibilities entrusted to the initiated young; and the interest shown by the spectators is an index of the social significance of the occasion.

We shall now turn to rituals and ceremonies of Upanayana as described in the Sūtras Smṛtis and Prayōgas. As we have already noted Gaṇapati Pūjana, Puṇyāhavācana, Mātṛkāpūjana and Nāndi Śraddha are a must for all Saṃskāras. Āpastamba says<sup>3</sup> that on

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1 Nunn; Sir T. P. Education: Its Data and First Principles (1935) Rev. Ed. Edward Arnold, London 1935.

2 Nunn: op. cit.

the day of Upanayana the boy with his parents seeks permission from the assembly of learned gathering for initiation. According to Āśvalāyana Pūrva prayaga<sup>4</sup> the Yajamāna with his boy should perform expiations (Kṛcchrācaraṇa) for Kāmacāra, Kānavāda, Kāma Bhakṣaṇa and other known or unknown sins.

The next rite is Digvapana or Śuddhikarma. This is an Ālankārika karma as well as a Śuddhi karma. The boy is to be well groomed before he is sent to Ācārya. This ceremony is normally preceded by Bhōjana or joint meal. (See Photo: 1) Here the mother and the child eat together for the last time. According to Dr. Altekar<sup>5</sup> it marked the end of an irregular life of a child and reminded the boy that he was no longer an irresponsible child and that he had to lead a systematic life thence onward. As noted by Dr. R. B. Pandey Upanayana being a lengthy ceremony, the boy was fed before it began so that he may not get hungry during the ceremony.<sup>6</sup> However it is a sad touching ceremony. After the mother's feast, the play mates of the boy also given a chance to take food with their friend, who is taking leave off him. So this is the last meal to the boy, with his mother and friends,

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3 Āpastamba Gr. Sū. IV-10.5.

4 .....ममास्य कुमारस्य जन्मप्रभृत्येतत् क्षणपर्यन्तं बाल्ये वयसि अज्ञानतः पित्राद्युपेक्षया च संभावितानां सवर्णाऽसवर्णधात्रीपरिपालनं जननीव्यतिरिक्तस्तन्यपानं स्त्रीसहभोजनं उच्छिष्टभोजनं पर्युषितभोजनं विवसन्नान्नपानं सजातीयविजातीयसहचरक्रीडासल्लापसंस्पर्शनं अनियतमूत्रपुरीषोत्सर्जनं तत्तत्कालशौचाभावप्रभृतीनां सर्वेषां पापानां अपनोदनार्थं पूर्वपूर्वसंस्कारकालातिक्रमणदोषनिवृत्त्यर्थं कामचारकामवादकामभक्षणादिसमस्तदोषपरिहारद्वारा अस्य वटोः उपनेयत्वयोग्यता सिद्ध्यर्थं, मम च उपनेतृत्वाधिकारसिद्ध्यर्थं कृच्छ्राचरणं करिष्ये ।

Āśvalāyana Pūrva Prayōga: P. 88.

5 Altekar A.S., Education in Ancient India. The Indian Book Shop; Benares 1934; P. 19.

6 R.B. Pandey, Hindu Samskaras; Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi-1991- P. 129.

who is departing to his teacher's house. Hence this departing joint meal is more significant.

Before the shave, hot water is to be smeared on the head, with the recitation of the mantra 'उष्णेन वाय उदकेनेहि । अदितिः केशान् वपतु'. Then the hair on the boy's head is cut in all the four directions by the Ācārya reciting the appropriate four mantras to different deities requesting them the long life, fame and wealth for the child. The cut hairs are taken on a plate with cowdung on it and mother stands by the side of Ācārya reciting the mantra 'यत् क्षुरेण....' which means don't lose the life of this boy, while cutting the hair with sharp blade. Then the hairs with the cowdung are disposed of keeping them under the Audumbara tree. After the symbolic shave done by the Ācārya, the boy's head is well shaved by a barbar, (See Photo No. 2) and he is given a bath. It is a ceremonial bath, because the mother and the other kith and kins pour the water and he will be purified bodily as well as mentally. (See Photo No. 3)

By that time the Ācārya is ready with the Agni. The teacher being touched by the boy offers oblations to the fire, the boy has to sit to the north of the fire facing East. At the end the student has to offer stick of palāśa to Agni, reciting the mantra 'आयुर्दा देव जरसम्' etc. This mantra praises the Lord Agni to give long life and accept his oblations.

Then the boy is asked to mount a stone kept north to the fire. The student places his right foot on the stone with the words 'Tread on this stone; like a stone be firm. Tread the foes down; turn away the enemies'.<sup>7</sup> This is called 'Aśmārōhaṇa' or mounting the stone.

The stone is the symbol of strength and firmness.<sup>8</sup> The purpose of this rite is to maintain good physique and character. The stone symbolically delivers a good religious teaching to the student that the firmness of mind and strength of character are the most essential needs of an ideal student.

Then the boy has to be dressed with a new Kaupīna and cloth and Āpastamba wants that the cloth should be brought right from the loom then. The cloth is sanctified by recitation of two mantras beginning with 'रेवतीस्त्वा', and 'या अकृण्वन्'. When the cloth is well tied up the Ācārya sanctifies him by reciting the mantra 'परीदं वासः.' All the mantras are just prayers to different Dēvatas to bestow long life and intelligence on the boy. A brahmachāri has to wear two garments, one for the lower part of the body (vāsas) another for covering the upper part of the body (uttariya). The Hindu idea of decorum required that, when engaged in a religious ceremony, the upper part of the body should be covered with a piece of cloth. On the occasion of the Upanayana, therefore, the young scholar was offered an upper garment, because from this time his proper religious life began. We have already discussed about the materials and other details of the clothes. At present the clothes dyed in Haridra (yellow) are offered to all the twice born. The yellowish cloth gives a show of embryonic atmosphere to the boy. (See Photo No 4)

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7 Mānava Gr. Sū. I 22-10.

8 Ibid. i. 22. 12. and Bhāradvāja Gr. Sū. I. 8.



Reciting the mantra 'इयं दुरुक्तात्' and 'ऋतस्य गोप्त्री' the Ācharya ties a belt or girdle (Mēkhalā) round the waist of the boy. It was made of triple cord, which symbolised that the student was always encircled by the three vēdas.<sup>9</sup> (See Photo No. 5) Then he is covered with a deer skin by reciting the mantra 'मित्रस्य चक्षुः'. After tying the girdle comes the most important item of the Saṃskāra, according to the later authority, the investing the student with the sacred thread. We have already discussed the history of yajñōpavīta in detail. The Ācarya, while investing the student with sacred thread repeats on appropriate mantra, asking for strength longlife and illumination for the boy, (यज्ञोपवीतं परमं पवित्रं.....etc. Pāraskara Gr. Sū. II 2. 13) The Bramhacāri rises the right hand and the Yajñōpavīta is to be put on with the above verse. (See Photo N. 6.)

After the student is fully equipped with the necessities of a student life, a series of symbolic acts follow, before the Ācārya properly took the student in his charge. To the north of Agni some darbhas are spread and the boy is made to sit on them with the mantra 'आगन्त्रा समगन्महि...' Pours water in the joined hands of the student so that he may be purified to receive the Sāvitrī mantras (See Photo No. 7). This is the symbol of purification. Then the Ācārya sprinkles that water on the boy with the mantras 'समुद्राद्रमि....'

Then the Ācārya holds his right hand reciting the mantra 'सविता ते हस्तमग्रभीत्'. It is not I holding you, but Savitā is holding your hand'. Likewise different gods are holding your hand, at last he says that you became friend of Dharma. Then the Ācārya shows him

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9 वेदत्रयेणावृतोऽहं इति मन्येत स द्विजः ॥ Āśvalāyana quoted in V.M.S. Vol. I. P. 432.

the Sun and prays the Sun God' देव सवितरेष ते ब्रह्मचारी; तं गोपय समामृत' 'O! God Savita! This is Bramhacāri; I am offering him to you. Please protect him.' (See Photo No. 8)

These indicate the humbleness on the part of the Ācārya that he is not stronger himself in the task of protecting the boy so he prays Gods to protect the student. Then after taking the permission of the Dēvatas he initiates the boy into the Bramhacaryāśrama by reciting the mantra 'सुप्रजाः प्रजया भूयाः; सुवीरो वीरैः; सुवर्चसा वर्चसा; सुपोषः पोषैः' in his right ear. This is the 'Bramhōpadēśa'. The student replies 'I am a student sir'.<sup>10</sup>

Then follows a small beautiful question and answer session between the Ācārya and the student starting with 'को नामासि' - what is your name? 'असौ नामास्मि' - I am so and so 'कस्य ब्रह्मचार्यसि' - why did you become Bramhacāri?' - 'whose student are you?' Boy says, 'yours' etc. It is just the same as we find in our schools today when our children have to be admitted. (See Photo No. 9)

The boy is now ready for important Upadēśa; but before that the Upanayana Hōma is performed (See Photo No. 10). The Ācārya gets the Hōma done by the boy reciting the mantras and getting them repeated by the boy. There are eleven mantras and all of them are prayers to several Gods to give sufficient intelligence and intellectual capacity to receive the knowledge from the Ācārya. The Ācārya also prays that the boy be given long life, health and intelligence.<sup>11</sup> The prayers done by both are really significant. They indicate

10 ब्रह्मचर्यमार्गं इति कुमार आह । प्रष्टं परस्य प्रतिवचनं कुमारस्य । Āpastamba Gr. Sū. IV. II. 1.2.

11 Āpastamba Gr. Sū. IV-II-6.

that in the Gurukula system the relationship between the teacher and the taught is not one of the master and the student but almost a father and a son.

At the end of the Hōma the ācārya sits on a darbhāsana with the mantra 'राष्ट्रभृदस्य'. The boy then sits in front of the Ācārya; holds his right foot with his right hand and says 'Ācārya, recite the Sāvitrī mantra'. The teacher recites the Sāvitrī to him first Pāda by Pāda, then hemistich by hemistich and finally the whole verse. Finally he teaches the whole together with controlled breath (See Photo No. 11). We have already discussed the significance of Gāyatrī mantra. So this is the famous Sāvitrī Upadēśa popularly known as Gāyatrī Upadēśa. Since the Dēvatā of mantra is savitr the mantra is called Sāvitrī. Of course the metre is Gāyatrī and since this metre is accorded a special place in the Vēdas the mantra also goes by this name.

Then the boy performs Ācamana - (See Photo No. 12) smearing his lips with water; the relevant mantra is 'अवृधमासौ....' etc. Which means 'Now I am rich with the recipient of Sāvitrī mantra; Dear inner soul, please keep it safe inside and don't allow it to go out.' After ācamana reciting the mantra ब्राह्मण आणीस्थः' touches both his ears, symbolically gesturing that the mantra just now received should not go out.

The teacher should give staff of palāśa to the student after teaching him Sāvitrī,<sup>12</sup> (See Photo No. 13) student holding it in front of him, recites the mantra 'सुश्रवः सुश्रवसं कुरु'

12 दण्डमुत्तरेणादत्ते ।

Āpastamba Gr. Sū. IV - 2.14.

etc. It means in the olden days Gods studied the Vedic Text under this Palāśa tree. The Palāśa grasps the whole vedic text so it is called as suśrava. Here the student requests this Palāśa to give its grasping capacity to him also. Just like it he would also protect the Treasure of Vēda by holding this staff of Palāśa. It would enrich his listening and grasping power like it.

Then the boy is made to take oaths starting with 'स्मृतं च मे अस्मृतं च मे' etc.. He takes oaths not to speak falsehood and speak truth only, to be always devoted to vidyā and never entertain Avidyā etc. We have to appreciate here the attitude of sūtrakāras. They are not satisfied only with the following of the positive aspect but they want that the negative aspect should be scrupulously eschewed.

The Agni has to be protected for three full days, performing Samidhādāna, every morning and evening. The verses uttered here are full of educational significance. The student wipes with his hand the ground round the fire with the mantra 'परित्वा अग्ने....' etc. Then he puts fuel to fire with the prayer; with beautiful mantras. They are all prayer to Agni for bestowing him with all the Śraddha, Mēdha, Prajñā etc, required for getting good education. The sacred fire is the symbol of life and light for which the student strives. It is the centre of all religious activities.

The Bramhacāri should not eat salt, meat or hot stuff foods.<sup>13</sup>

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13 भारलवणवर्जनञ्च ।

Āpastamba Gr. Sū. IV. 2.20.

Even after the first three days, the boy should perform the Samidhādhāna in a different Agni made ready at that time.

This should be continued till he gets married. For the samidhādhāna it is not necessary according to Āpastamba to get only particular kind of Samidhā. It may be any kind of tree brought from the forest. We cannot expect a young boy of 7 or 8 to go and fetch only particular kind of Samidhā everyday. If it becomes difficult the probability is that the boy will have tendency not to do the samidhādhāna. But the idea is that the performance is more important and should be made as simple and as possible.

On the Upanayana day after the samidhādhāna, the āchārya advises the boy with some injunctions starting with 'ब्रह्मचार्यसि' - you are a Bramhacārin. These are all the duties of Bramhacarya that should be followed by the pupil. The student says 'बाढम्' for each one. 'आपोशान' - consume water or sip water. Water means nectar or Ambrosia. 'कर्म कुरु' - Do thy work. 'दिवा मा सुषुप्थाः' - Do not sleep in the day time. 'भैक्षाचार्यं कुरु' - Go round for alms. 'आचार्याधीनो भव' - study the Vēda with devotion to the teacher. These commandments are real advice as well as a symbolical performance. (See Photo No. 14)

Then follows the student's ceremonious begging or Bhaikṣacaryā. Bhikṣa is the chief means of his maintenance through out his career. On the day of Upanayana he begs with his mother first; (See Photo No. 15) then in other families which are generously disposed; he brings the food to his guru and announces it to him with the words 'these are the alms'.

Baudhāyana<sup>14</sup> gives the same rules and adds that a Brāhmaṇa student should beg with the words 'भवती भिक्षां देहि', a Kṣatriya with the words 'भिक्षां भवती देहि' and a Vaiśya with the words 'देहि भिक्षां भवती'. This begging makes the student humble and reminds the debt that he has towards the society.

On the 4th day the Ācārya takes the old cloth that the boy is wearing reciting the mantra 'यस्य ते'... Then the boy takes a new one and wears it. Thus ends the Upanayana Samskāra.

The whole procedure of Upanayana is more elaborately described in the Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra, Hiraṇyakēśi Gṛhya Sūtra and Gōbhila. A few points of interest and divergence may be noted here briefly. It is remarkable that Āśvalāyana, Āpastamba and several other sūtrakāras do not say a word about the sacred thread, while a few like Hiraṇyakēśi Gṛhya Sūtra (1. 2. 6) Bhāradvāja Gṛhya Sūtra (I. 3) and Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra (1. 22. 2) say that the boy already wears the Yajñōpavīta before the hōma begins; while the Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra (II 5. 7) says that the boy is given the Yajñōpavīta and then made to recite the wellknown mantra 'यज्ञोपवीतं परमं पवित्रं' and the Vaikhānasa Smārta Sūtra (II. 5) says that the teacher gives the upper garment to the boy with the verse 'परिदं वासः', the sacred thread with the mantra 'यज्ञोपवीतम्' and the black antelope skin with the mantra 'मित्रस्य चक्षुः'. Sudarśana on Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra 10. 5 says that the boy puts on the Yajñōpavīta with the mantra before he takes his meal (according to some) or (according to others)

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14 Baudha. Gr. Sū. II. 5. 47-53.

before he puts the fuel stick on the fire and relies on Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra<sup>15</sup> for support. According to Karka and Harihara (on Pāraskara) the Yajñōpavīta was given to the student by the teacher after the tying of the girdle. The Saṃskāra Tattva (P. 9347) says the same. Late works like the Saṃskāra Ratnamāla (p. 202) prescribe the wearing of the sacred thread before the hōma.

Āpastamba, Baudhāyana and Pāraskara prescribe a dinner to brāhmaṇas before the ceremonies begin and receiving their benedictions. Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra (x. 5), Bhāradvāja Gṛhya Sūtra (I. 1) and Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 5. 7) say that the boy also is made to take food; according to later works (e. g: Saṃskāra Ratnamāla) the boy takes his meal in the same disk with his mother (for the last time) and other Brahmacārins (eight in number) are also invited at the same time for meals in the company of the boy. This practice is observed in modern times. Almost all prescribe that the boy is shaved on this day (as in caula); this also is done in modern times. But in ancient times the shaving was done by the ācārya himself as stated by Sudraśana on Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra 10. 6-8.

There are several other matters detailed in Āpastamba and others, on which Āśvalāyana and some others are silent. The important ones are mentioned below:

- (a) Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra (10. 9), Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra (1. 23. 12), Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 5. 10), Khādīra Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 4), and Bhāradvāja Gṛhya Sūtra (I. 8) make the boy tread on a stone to the north of the fire with his

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<sup>15</sup> Āpastamba Dha. Sū.: 1.5.15.1.

right foot after hōma. The mantras repeated in the several sūtras are significant asking the boy to be firm like a stone.

(b) Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra (1. 22. 3) and Kāthaka Gṛhya Sūtra (41. 10) prescribe after hōma the tasting of the curds thrice after repeating the verse 'दधिकाव्यो अकारिषम्'

(c) Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 2), Bhāradvāja Gṛhya Sūtra (1. 7), Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 1-4), Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 5. 25), Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra (I. 22. 4-5) and Khādīra Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 4. 12) refer to the fact that the teacher asks the boy his name and the latter pronounces his name. The teacher also asks whose brahmachāri the boy is.

There are so many confusions as to the order of the various components of the ceremony of Upanayana. A few striking examples may be given:

(a) Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra treats of the tying of the girdle and the giving of the staff almost at the end of the ceremony, while Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra puts this after hōma and immediately before Añjalipūrāṇa.

(b) Āśvalāyana puts Āditya Darśana after the boy's hand is held by the teacher and before paridāna (handing the boy over to the deities). But Bhāradvāja (1-9) puts it after the instruction in the observances of brahmacharya. The Bhāradvāja Gṛhya Sūtra (I. 9) treats of Āditya Darśana almost at the end of the rites, while Āśvalāyana places it among the earlier ones after hōma.

(c) Besides the same mantras are employed by different sūtras for different purposes; for example, the mantra 'सुश्रवः...' etc. is employed by Āpastamba at the time of taking the staff by the boy, while Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra (I.



22. 19), Bhāradvāja Gṛhya Sūtra (I. 10), Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra (I. 23. 17) employ it in 'Mēdhājanana' (on the 4th day of Upanayana) and Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 4) employs it at the time of putting a fuel stick on fire. Āśvalāyana employs the verse 'युवा सुवासाः' (Rg. Vē. III. 8. 4) for making the boy turn round the time of tying the girdle round the boy's waist by the Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra (I. 22-8) and Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra (II. 2)

Later writers went on adding mantras and details. On the day prior to Upanayana the Nāndi Śraddha was performed as said by Haradatta on Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra 10-5. Graha makha (sacrifice to the planets) also may be performed the previous day or on any day within 7 or 10 days of the Upanayana. Then before the actual Upanayana, there is the worship of Gaṇapati and of Kuladēvatas, Puṇyāhavācana, the worship of Mātṛs and the consecration of the maṇḍapadēvatas. In Saṃskāra Ratnamāla (pp. 197-210) we can get the detailed modern procedure of Upanayana.

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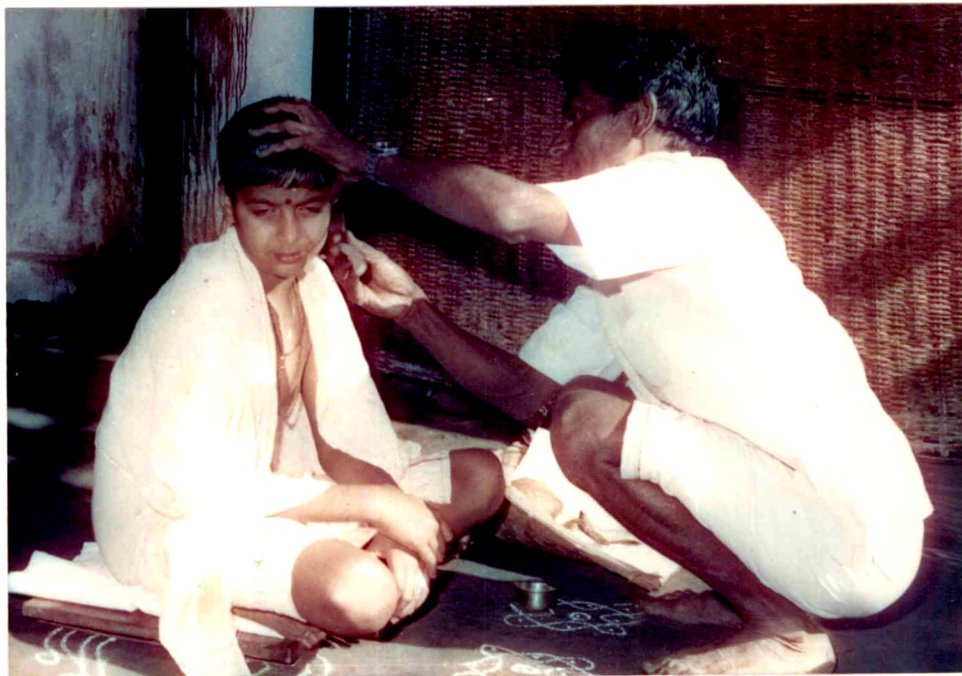
## Appendix I

### Proceedings of Upanayana : A pictorial View



1. Joint Meal

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2. Shaving



3. Ceremonial Bath



4. Offering the Yellow Garment.





5. Mēkhalā Bandhana



6. Yajñōpavīta Dhāraṇa

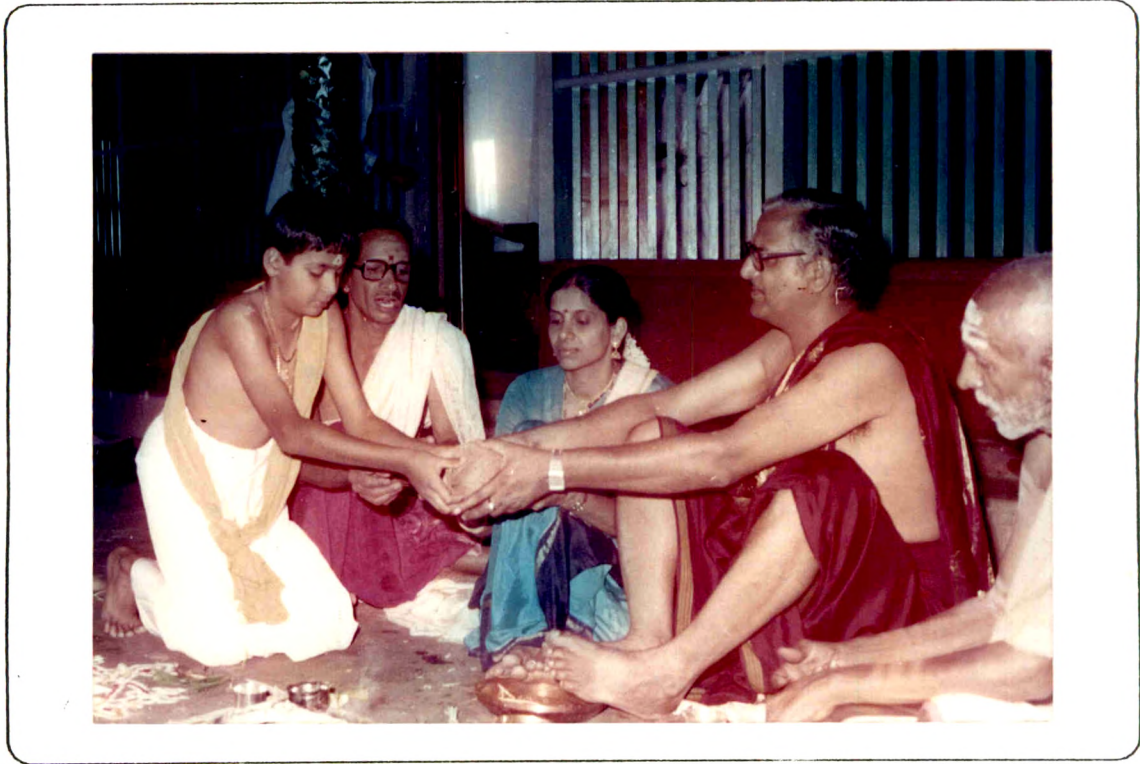


7. Purification by water





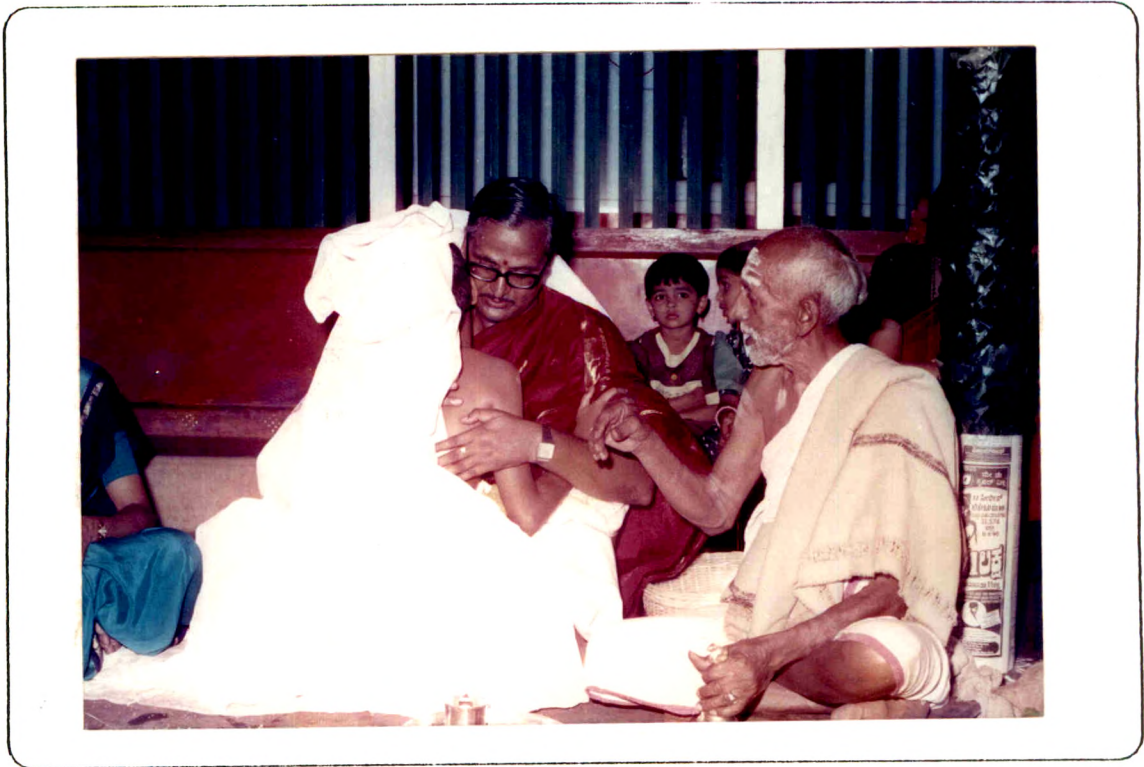
8. Sūrya Darśana



9. Question and Answer Session.



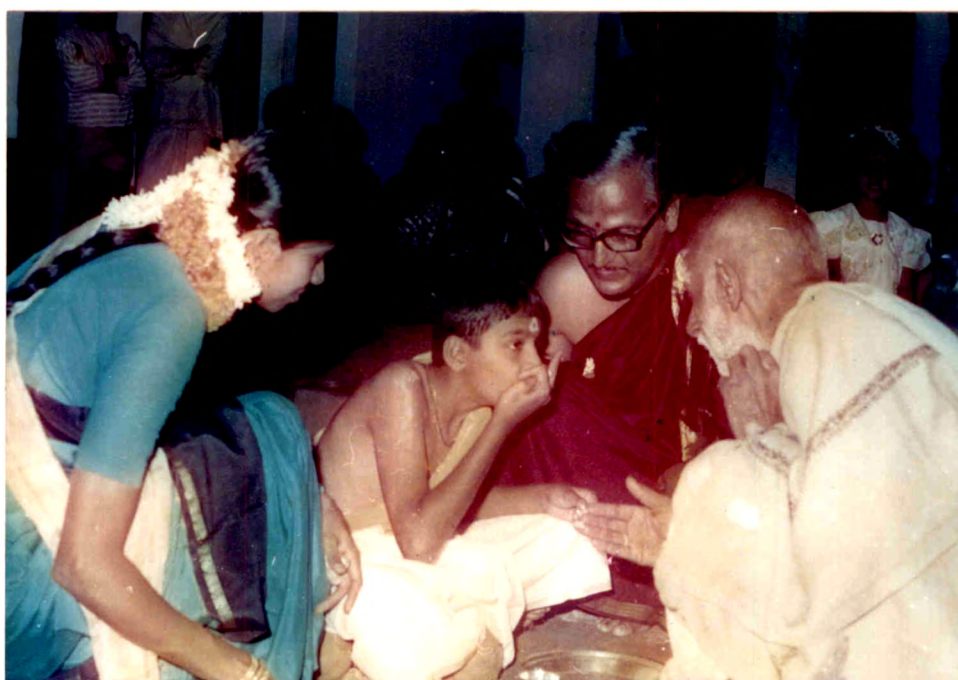
10. Performance of Hōma



11. Gāyatrī Upadēśa

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12. Performance of Ācamana



13. Palāśa Daṇḍa Grahṇa



14. Advice of Ācārya



15. Māṭṛ Bhikṣā



## CHAPTER VIII

### UPANAYANA SAṂSKĀRA: A PSYCHOLOGICAL VIEW AND SCIENCE OF CHANGE BEHIND IT

Psychology, which is defined as the science of soul or science of mind or science of behaviour or science of the activities of individual or science of experience and behaviour or study of objective behaviour by subjective experience or study of conscious experience is used to improve the general efficiency of the individual in various walks of life.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, today, we get many branches of psychology like General psychology, Social psychology, Abnormal psychology, Educational psychology, Clinical psychology etc. Under the purview of child psychology the present topic is discussed.

The Saṁskāras ordained by Dharmaśāstras are meant for the upliftment of human beings. The goal of the Saṁskāras is to make the man fit for the self-realisation. The Saṁskāras, which are performed to the body are related with mind minutely. Thus the Saṁskāras influence not only the body but also the mind. They purify the mind through the purification of the body.<sup>2</sup> The Saṁskāras add good qualities and remove the blemishes.

The Hindu sacraments help the individual to increase his abilities. They assist a man to lead a happy life in society. All sacraments are essential for the ethical, social, physical

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1 Social life in Ancient India - by Dr. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya; Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1965, P. 38.

2 Ibid. P. 40.

and psychological developments. The sacraments Garbhādhāna, Pūṃsavana, Sīmantōnnayana are performed before the birth of a child. Jātakarma, nāmakaraṇa, niṣkramaṇa, annaprāśana, cūḍākarma sacraments are performed to a child at infancy. The Upanayana Saṃskāra is performed at childhood as we have already noted.

Psychologists describe the childhood in two stages; one is early childhood i. e. from the age 3 to 6 years; other is later childhood i.e. from 7 to 12 years. A child develops mentally and physically in these stages rapidly. As a child grows, both quantitative and qualitative changes are taking place within him. The rudiments of good study habits can and should be learned at this stage. This is an age for checking and rechecking on vision and hearing as well as any speech difficulty that may be persisting.

The purpose of performing Upanayana is to carry the boy near the teacher for higher studies. Hence the Saṅkalpa of Upanayana prayōga is done thus: 'अस्य कुमारस्य द्विजत्व सिध्दा वेदाध्ययनाधिकार सिध्यर्थे उपनयनं करिष्ये ।'<sup>3</sup> According to the ancients, the study of the Vēda was considered as higher-level of study. Thinking and reasoning capacity in a child, grows between the ages of eight to eleven. During these years the child's sensory equipments become well developed. His perceptual powers increase in keenness and accuracy. All these developments are seen in the child according to the influence of the environment. The home and the members of the family are the most important factors of influence on

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3 R̥gvēda Prayōga Dīpika by Laxminarasihma Bhatta, Vēda Prakashana Saṃsthe; Bangalore, 1991, P. 142.

childhood. The society of ancient India was based on Cāturvarṇya system. Therefore the environment of the Brāhmaṇical house was helping the child to think or to reason earlier to other children. Hence different age levels for different varṇas have fixed by the smṛtis and this was based on psychology.

Intelligence is the ability to get new informations.<sup>4</sup> It includes what the intelligence test measures, efficient problem solving abilities, the power of understanding and the ability to think abstractly. There are many tests to test the ability of intelligence. These tests are constructed experimentally and administered in standard ways. Brain plays an important role in developing the capacities and abilities of intelligence. During the later childhood, a child proceeds towards creative thinking. The child starts to admire persons who have become public figures and some times regards them as ideals to be imitated. This is one of the aspects of intellectual growth.<sup>5</sup>

Upanayana sacrament helps the boy to develop his intelligence. It allows him to enter the Vedic lore. There he has to study the Vēdas with Vēdāṅgas, Dharmaśāstras and other sciences. Automatically it helps the boy to develop his understanding capacities. The tests which were framed according to that age, were exhibiting not only the intelligence but also the memory power of the boys. The system of chanting of mantras was an art and a test of memory power. The eight types of chanting i.e.: Jaṭā pāṭha, Mālā pāṭha, śikhā pāṭha,

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4 Psychology - B. Vonhaller Gilmer. Horper International Edition, Newyork, 1970; P. 208.

5 Ibid. P. 210.

Rēkhā pāṭha, Dhvaja pāṭha, Daṇḍa pāṭha, Ratha pāṭha and Ghana pāṭha are standard IQs of those days. These tests were helping the brain to develop and they were the touchstone to test the memory power. Ancients, to increase the memory power, used to perform mēdhājanana at the time of Upanayana. There the father of the boy makes a saṅkalpa in this way: 'मम कुमारस्य उपनयनव्रतसमाप्ति वेदग्रहणसामर्थ्यलक्षण मेधासिद्धिद्वारा श्रीपरमेश्वर प्रीत्यर्थ मेधाजननाख्यं कर्म करिष्ये।' <sup>6</sup> In this ritual the boy requests the deities to bestow 'mēdhā' for him in this way:

मेधा मह्यमङ्गिरसो मेधां सप्रर्षयो ददुः ।  
 मेधामिन्द्रश्चाग्निश्च मेधां धाता ददातु मे ॥  
 मेधां मे वरुणो राजा मेधां देवी सरस्वती ।  
 मेधां मे अश्विनौ देवावाधत्तां पुष्करस्तजा ॥ <sup>7</sup>

From this ritual, a boy feels that he has got mēdhā from which his memory power increases.

It is generally accepted that the emotions add richness to life.<sup>8</sup> Emotional reactions are closely related to the health. Hence it is said that a sound mind should be there in a sound body. If the body is weak or strong the mind is also weak or strong. Both develop reciprocally. The development of body and mind cause a strong will-power. During the childhood, a child is in need of love and affection. Hence one should shower love on the child but at the same time a child should be trained to show interest in the welfare of the

6 R̥gvēda Prayōga Deepika by Laxminarasihma Bhatta, Vēda Prakashana Samsthe, Bangalore, 1991, P. 156.

7 R̥gvēda: 10-166-1 and 2.

8 Child Psychology, Crow and Crow. Barness and Nofle, Newyork, 1969, P. 77

others. There are many behaviour problems that centre round love and affection. Hence they need careful guidance. Masturbation, sex play, homo-sex and such other sexual behaviour manifest at this stage. Anger causes one to behave aggressively. A child must learn to control his anger in an accepted way. Consistent behaviour by adults is important in dealing with the control of anger. Jealousy, another emotion, is born in social settings. Fear, worry and phobias are other emotional behaviours.

The Upanayana sacrament assists to control the emotional behaviour of a boy. Upanayana is like a licence to enter brahmacaryāśrama and another sacrament Samāvartana is a passport to exit. During this course, the boy is trained, not only to control the emotional behaviour but also to overcome the related stresses. At the end of the Upanayana ritual, the ācārya or the preceptor instructs the boy thus - ब्रम्हचार्यसि, अपोऽश्नान । कर्म कुरु । दिवा मा स्वाप्सीः । आचार्याधीनो वेदमधीष्व । सायं प्रातर्भिक्षेयाः । सायं प्रातः समिधमाधेहि । द्वादशवर्षाणि वेदग्रहणान्तं वा ब्रह्मचर्यं चर ।<sup>9</sup> etc. All these instructions are to control the sense organs. Manu and Yājñavalkya gave importance to the indriyanigraha. Manu says that one should control the sense organs like a charioteer who controls the horses.<sup>10</sup> He should be away from dice, ramour, lie, looking at women, which cause to excite his mind.<sup>11</sup> He should sleep alone<sup>12</sup>

9 R̥gvēda Prayōga Deepika by Laxminarasihma Bhatta, Vēda Prakashana Samsthe, Bangalore, 1991, P. 157.

10 संयमे यन्नमातिष्ठेत् विद्वान्यन्तेव वाजिनाम् ।

Manu: II, 88.

11 द्यूतं च जनवादं च परिवादं तथानृतम् ।

स्त्रीणां च प्रेक्षणालम्भमुपघातं परस्य च ॥

Manu: II - 179.

He should serve his teacher and should take him as a model for his future. It seems that in ancient time, the code-makers were not allowing a boy to set idle. They made him to engage all the time because they knew that an idle brain is a devil's workshop. All these instructions clearly show that they were aimed at controlling the mind of a boy and making him a good citizen.

Attitudes are not static. Attitudes are acquired through experience. Attitudes express a person's liking or disliking. The developed attitude is reflected in the individual's behaviour. During the childhood imitation and suggestion are potent moulders of attitudes. Suggestion exerts a great influence upon the direction and development of attitudes. Moreover a child's social status is decided by his attitude towards others. Having taken this matter into account the Upanayana sacrament helps a boy to develop good attitudes at an early age. It teaches the boy to give respect to the teacher and the elders. In Gurukula, a pupil has to touch the feet of the teacher and utter 'Om' in the beginning and at the end of the studies.<sup>13</sup> He should perform sandhyāvandana daily. All such attitudes are cultivated at Upanayana only. The preceptor desires that his pupil should continue the same attitudes in his future life also. Therefore he ties mēkhalā around his waist. In the Gurukula he

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12 एकः शयीत सर्वत्र....

Manu: II, 180.

13 ब्रह्मणः प्रणवं कुर्यादादावन्ते च सर्वदा ॥

Manu, II - 74.

shows interest towards good activities and he takes decision about his ideal model for his future life. He worships many deities and expects lustre, vigour etc.

मयि मेधां मयि प्रजां मय्यग्निस्तेजो दधातु ।  
 मयि मेधां मयि प्रजां मयीन्द्र इन्द्रियं दधातु ॥  
 मयि मेधां मयि प्रजां मयि सूर्यो भ्राजो दधातु ।  
 यत्ते अग्ने तेजस्तेनाहं तेजस्वी भूयासम् ।  
 यत्ते अग्ने वर्चस्तेनाहं वर्चस्वी भूयासम् ।  
 यत्ते अग्ने हरस्तेनाहं हरस्वी भूयासम् ।<sup>14</sup>

In this mantra a boy expects that he should become a Tējasvin and varcasvin. This is a step to overall development of personality.

Every man engages in one or another activity. The reason behind it is interest. It is different from attitude. If attitude is deeprooted and consistent, interest is fleeting and inconsistent. Interest arises in the child according to the environment. Interests are associated with motives, responses and attitudes which are developing. Now a days we see that children show their interest towards comic reading, hearing the commentary, watching T.V. or films, playing cricket etc. due to the influence of surrounding environment. Due to Upanayana Saṃskāra, a child develops his interest towards daily rites, studies etc. In a

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14 These mantras occur in तै. सं. III. 3.1.2 and III. 5.3.2; also in हिरण्यगृ. बौ. गृ. II. 5.62. &c. which mean 'May Agni bestow on me insight, offspring and lustre; on me may Indra bestow insight, offspring, and vigour (indriyas); on me may the Sun bestow insight, offspring and radiance; what thy lustre is, oh, Agni, may I thereby become lustrous; what thy strength is, Agni, may I thereby become strong; what thy consuming power is Agni, may I thereby acquire consuming power.'

Gurukula he is trained according to his interest. The teacher gives much importance to the pupil's interest as well as to the tradition.

Man is a social animal. But a child at birth is neither social or non-social. The child becomes a part of the society gradually. A child's major responsibility is to learn to adjust to the group or groups of which he is a member. The cultural heritage is essential for him and the existing culture needs him. During the ages from six to ten, the child exhibits his behaviour progressively. The socialisation process begins here only. Friendships, quarrels, competition, co-operation etc. will help the child in his social development.

The Upanayana sacrament puts the child in Gurukula. Here the child comes out from the house. He associates with his mates who are coming from all walks of life. He meets various types of children. Here he influences others and he is influenced by others. In Gurukula he knows more about his culture. The śikhā on head and Yajñōpavīta on the body are the marks of the culture. The child understands the significance of his culture. It will influence on his behaviour.

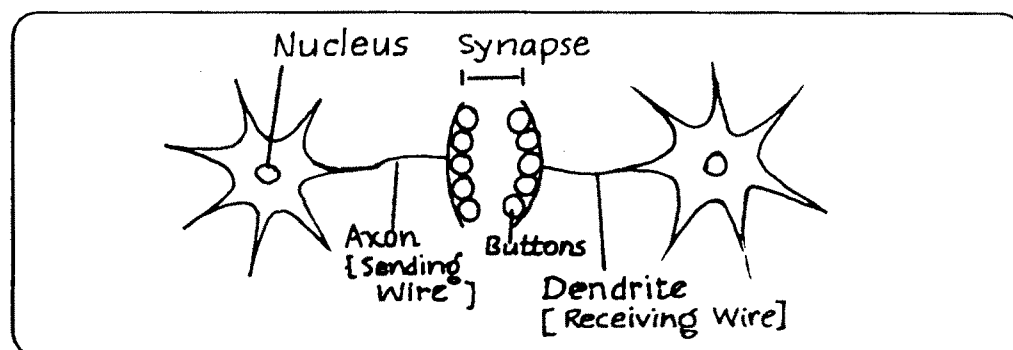
The purpose of psychology is to train an individual to predict and control his own behaviour as well as others. The study of psychology leads a man towards self-perception. There is interrelation between self perception and self realisation. Thus psychology helps a man to reach his final goal. In this connection the sacraments guide a man properly. Therefore all Saṃskārās may be viewed Psycho-Therapies to develop the personality of a man.



Further, conservative estimates show that there are at least ten billion neurons in the human brain, which by the age of seven years are almost adult in size and weight. Thereafter, complexity is the result not of growth of more cells but of connections between cells.<sup>15</sup> This information is now available because of the development of electron microscopes which, in combination with computers, can make pictures of 'Invisible' realities sufficiently large so that it becomes 'visible'.

Each neuron is like an electric generator; some neurons function constantly while others fire intermittently as they receive messages from other neurons. Each of the nerve cells produces about 20 millivolts of power and information is coded by the frequency of impulses. It is this electricity that gets displayed on electro encephalographic (E E G) tracings.

The neuron has three parts (1) nucleus (2) receiving wires (Dendrites) and (3) sending wires (axon). The Nucleus evaluates the message.



BRAIN CELL TRANSMISSION

15 Vivekananda Kendra Patrika; Madras 1994, P. 17.

The sending wire of one cell does not touch the receiving wires of other cells. They lie on the other side of a chasm that is a millionth of an inch wide. The message must 'Jump' the chasm, called the synapse and then the next cell repeats the process. Brain messages can perform this leap about 100 times per second.

The sending wire of the cell ends in little protein bubbles called buttons. The actual transmission of the message across the synapse is a biochemical reaction. Chemicals produced by buttons force the message across. When action is repeated, cells get stimulated and so the size and number of buttons increase. This reduces the span (synapse) over which the message should jump. Thus more the buttons, the less energy is required for action to occur and habits are thus formed.

The more often we perform the act, the more firmly the habit is formed. Buttons which transmit messages along habit pathways are thought to be permanent. The name Engram is given to the specific network of neurons in habit or memory chains that replay the same picture or movement with stimulation or association.

The encouraging discovery is that even though we cannot destroy the old buttons, we can grow new ones and build new neural pathways around the old ones. The most important element in building new habits is not time but energy. And whole heartedness produces maximum energy.

Considering that it takes time to change our habit pathways, we cannot become totally different overnight. A small change is possible but then even an infinitesimal change will make significant difference in the life's journey.

However giving proper Saṃskāras, especially Upanayana Saṃskāra, in proper time is more important and useful. Rearing a child is a full time job and the more we invest in the early stage upto 7 or 8 years, the better will be the person. Unfortunately, we Indians neglect this vital factor in man making. We try to improve the breed of a cow or a horse but not that of human beings. It is high time, we bring back the age-old tradition of Saṃskāras to make a man a superman, a divine man, a good man, a man with capital 'M' and such men will make the nation with capital 'N'.

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## Chapter IX

### THE DUTIES OF BRAMHACĀRIN AND EDUCATION

After Upanayana the Bramhacārins or students were expected to reside at the the house of their Gurus<sup>1</sup> and in return rendered many personal services, such as tending his cows and looking after the sacrificial fire. From the story of Satyakāma Jābāla we learn that he was asked to stay with the cows of the Guru and return only when they had increased to a thousand. Moreover, the student helped his Guru by begging alms also.<sup>2</sup>

Yājñavalkya gives the following rules for the guidance of the students at the teacher's house:

- (a) "And also he should study when invited whatever he obtains he should present it to him. He should always promote his interest by all acts of mind, speech and body"
- (b) "The naiṣṭhika bramhacāri should live with the ācārya, in the absence of the latter, with the son or wife or even fire."<sup>3</sup>

The above account seems to indicate that there were two classes of Bramhacārins or students: naiṣṭhika, i. e., he who regulated himself as a student till the time of his niṣṭha

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1 आचार्यकुलवासिन् or अन्तेवासिन् : (Chāndogya Upanishad, III : 2.5)

2 Ibid., IV. 3.5.

3 आहूतश्चाप्यधीयीत लब्धं चास्मै निवेदयेत् ।

हितं तस्याचरन्नित्यं मनोवाक्कायकर्मभिः ॥

नैष्ठिको ब्रम्हचारी तु वसेदाचार्य सन्निधौ ।

तदभावेऽस्य तनये पत्न्यां वैश्वानरेऽपि वा ॥

Yājñavalkya, I. 27 and 48).

or death and upakurvāṇa or he who became a student temporarily. Both, however, had to take the teacher's home as their own and had to look after his interest. Manu also appears to make a distinction between the temporary and the life-long students.<sup>4</sup> He observes further that 'he who desires incomparable bliss (in heaven) shall not dwell during his life time in (the house of) a non-brāhmaṇical teacher, nor with a Brāhmaṇa who does not know the whole Vēda and the Aṅgas.<sup>5</sup> This seems to imply indirectly that temporary students could live in the house of non-brāhmaṇical teachers. That the non-brāhmīns really acted as teachers is also proved by numerous evidences. Thus Āpastamba refers to learning from Śūdras and women.<sup>6</sup> Bōdhāyana and Gautama also maintain that in times of distress the Brāhmaṇas may acquire knowledge from the non-Brāhmaṇa.<sup>7</sup> The Mahābhārata asserts that learning may be had of one who is hīna, i.e., of low caste.<sup>8</sup> Manu also says 'In times of distress (a student) may learn the Vēdas from one who is not a Brāhmaṇa and that he shall walk behind and serve (such a) teacher as long as the instruction lasts.<sup>9</sup> He goes even further and observes: 'He who possesses faith may receive pure learning even from

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4 Manu: II. 242-3.

5 Ibid., II. 242.

6 सा निष्ठा या विद्या स्त्रीषु शूद्रेषु च ।

Āpastamba: II, 29-11

7 अब्राह्मणादध्ययनमापदि ।

Baudhāyana: I. 3.41.

आपत्कल्पो ब्राह्मणस्याब्राह्मणाद्विद्योपयोगः । अनुगमनं शुश्रूषा ॥

Baudhāyana: VII, 1-2.

8 श्रद्धधानः शुभां विद्यां हीनादपि समाप्नुयात् ।

Mahābhārata: II, 241.

9 Manu: II, 241.

a man of lower caste, the highest law (dharma) even from the lowest, and an excellent wife even from a base family.<sup>10</sup>

Yājñavalkya is absolutely silent on the above issue but he does not seem to have been against getting learning from non-brāhmaṇical teachers specially when in his time the Buddhist and Jain monasteries acted as centres of education.

Yājñavalkya enjoins, as we have already seen, that the brahmachārīn should study when invited, i.e., he should not himself urge the teacher to teach him. This seems to have been an old practice as it is also referred to by earlier writers. Thus Manu says: "Both when ordered by his teacher, and without a (special) command, (a student) shall always exert himself in studying (the Vēda), and in doing what is serviceable to his teacher."<sup>11</sup> He also lays down the following injunctions: (a) "But to him who is about to begin studying, the teacher, always unwearied, must say: Ho recite! He shall leave off (when the teacher says): Let a stoppage take place"; (b) Let him always pronounce the syllable Ōm at the beginning and at the end of (a lesson in) the Vēda; (for) unless the syllable Ōm precede, (the lesson) will slip away (from him), and unless it follows it will fade away.<sup>12</sup> Similar

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10 श्रद्धावानः शुभां विद्यां आददीतावरादपि ।

अन्त्यादपि परं धर्मं स्वीरत्रं दुष्कुलादपि ॥

Manu: II, 238.

11 चोदितो गुरुणा नित्यमप्रचोदित एव वा ।

कुर्यादध्ययने यत्रमाचार्यस्य हितेषु च ॥

Manu: II, 191.

12 अध्वेष्यमाणन्तु गुरुर्नित्यकालमन्तः ।

अधीष्व भो इति ब्रूयाद्विरामोऽस्त्विति चारमेत् ॥

accounts we find in the earlier Dharmasūtras also. Thus Gautama says that ‘he should read when called upon to do so and he should do what is agreeable and beneficial to the teacher,’<sup>13</sup> while Āpastamba says that when he should begin his study he should pronounce Ōm.<sup>14</sup> It may be noted that Manu recommends such pronunciation both at the beginning and at the end, while Yājñavalkya is absolutely silent on the same.

Regarding the syllabus, Yājñavalkya ordains that the brahmachārin should read the four Vēdas, Vākōvākyam, i.e. the Vedic sayings in the form of questions and answers, the Purāṇas, the Nārāśamsis (the mantras in honour of the God Rudra), the Gāthikās (such as Yajñagāthā, Indra gāthā etc.), the Itihāsas (history such as the Mahābhārata, according to Vijñāneśvara) and the Vidyās.<sup>15</sup> The curriculum is more extensive and exhaustive than what is stated by Manu who lays emphasis on the study of the three Vēdas only, leaving out the Atharvan.<sup>16</sup> In fact, Yājñavalkya appears to be the earliest of the Dharmaśāstra writers who presents us with an exhaustive curriculum of the students. This shows that in his time learning in the different branches of arts and sciences had made considerable progress, and that is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the age in which he lived is

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ब्रह्मणः प्रणवं कुर्यादादावन्ते च सर्वदा ।

सवत्यनोऽङ्कतं पूर्वं पुरस्ताच्च विशीर्यते ।

Manu: II, 73-4.

13 आहूतोऽध्यायी । युक्तः प्रियहितयोः ।

Gautama: II, 36-7.

14 ओङ्कारस्स्वर्गद्वारं; तस्माद्ब्रह्माध्येष्यमाण एतदादि प्रतिपद्येत ॥

Āpastamba: I, 13.6.

15 Yāj.: I, 40-46.

16 Manu: III-1.

called the golden age of the ancient Indian history. Yājñavalkya's account is a cryptic one, but he covers many items when he recommends that the student must get proficiency in different Vidyās. What these different Vidyās were we can possibly guess to some extent. Caraka and Suśruta, who lived in the first century A. D. had composed important works on medicine and surgery and their works seem to have been studied with care. When Yājñavalkya states that the royal priest should be versed in astrology and the theory of punishment,<sup>17</sup> it may be presumed that Jyōtiṣa and Arthanīti were included in the course of studies.

When Kautilya says that 'a prince shall spend forenoon in receiving lessons in military arts concerning elephants, horses, chariots and weapons, and the afternoon in hearing the Itihāsa',<sup>18</sup> we get a good deal of light on the courses studied by the princes and the sons of the nobles. The Itihāsa said to include the Purāṇa, Itivṛtta (history), Ākhyāyikā (tales), Udāharaṇa (illustrative story), Dharmaśāstra and Arthaśāstra. Yājñavalkya had been greatly influenced by Kautilya, and it may be presumed, that he had in his mind all these subjects when he included Itihāsa in the curriculum. It may be noted in this connection that the Lalitavistara describes how prince Siddhārtha was versed in different branches of learning. The Hatigumpha inscription informs us that Khāravēla mastered sixty-four mukhya kalās,

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<sup>17</sup> Yājñā: I, 313.

<sup>18</sup> पूर्वमहर्भागं हस्त्यश्वरथप्रहरणविद्यासु विनयं गच्छेत् । पश्चिममितिहासश्रवणे । पुराणमिति वृत्तमाख्यायिकोदाहरणं धर्मशास्त्रं चेतिहासः ।

Arthaśāstra: P.10.



which would come under the Vidyās mentioned by Yājñavalkya.<sup>19</sup> Later authorities speak of the vidyās to be fourteen or eighteen in number and these include besides the Vēdas, Vēdāṅgas and the Purāṇa, subjects like Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Dhanurvēda, Gāndharva Vēda etc. An inscription of 517 A.D. refers to the proficiency of an ancestor of king Samkṣōbha in fourteen Vidyā Sthānas.<sup>20</sup> Bṛhaspati makes the interesting statement that carftsmanship in gold, music, dance etc. should be learnt in the house of the teacher.<sup>21</sup> This would imply that these were also taught to the brahmācārins. It is, however, difficult to reconcile this view of Bṛhaspati with the prescription of austere life of a student as advocated by Yājñavalkya, Manu and others. Manu actually enjoins that a brahmācārin should abstain from dancing, singing and playing (musical instruments)<sup>22</sup> Bōdhāyana also makes the same prohibition.<sup>23</sup> In the account of Yājñavalkya there is no such explicit prohibition, but from the nature of his description of brahmācārin's life it seems that he was also not in favour of getting him lessons in music and dancing. The account of Bṛhaspati, studied in the background of the early Dharmaśāstras, would imply, however, that whereas orthodox type of training was imparted in some centres of learning, there were other centres where

19 Selected Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and civilization; Vol. I, by D. C. Sircar, Calcutta, 1942.

20 Epigraphica Indica; Vol. VIII, P. 287.

21 As quoted in Vivāharatnākara, P. 141.

22 Manu: II, 178.

23 नृत्तगीत वादित्रगन्धमाल्योपानहच्छत्रधारणाञ्जनवर्जम् ।

Baudhāyana: I. 3.24.

education of unorthodox type, which evidently included music, dance etc., was also imported.

Manu's accounts indicate that at that time there was scope for commercial education and training in arts and crafts. These are possibly indicated by Yājñavalkya through his inclusion of vidyās in the curriculum. This education was imparted to the Vaiśyas in general. Thus Manu states as follows:

"(A Vaiśya) must know the respective value of gems, of pearls; of coral, of metals, of (cloth) made of thread, of perfumes, and of condiments. He must be acquainted with (the manner of) sowing of seeds, and of the good and bad qualities of fields, and he must perfectly know all measures and weights. Moreover, the excellence and defects of commodities, the advantages and disadvantages of (different) countries, the (probable) profit and loss of merchandise, and the means of properly rearing cattle. He must be acquainted with the (proper) wages of servants, with the various languages of men, with the manner of keeping goods, and (the rules of) purchase and sale."<sup>24</sup>

The above account clearly shows that a Vaiśya had a thorough education in commerce but it is not clear whether such a training was imparted to him in the house of his teacher, while he was a brahmachārin, but if that had been the case then it should be assumed that

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<sup>24</sup> Manu: IX, 329.32.

there were special centres of learning where the Vaiśyas among the dvijas were admitted for the purpose.

Though Yājñavalkya gives us an exhaustive account of the curriculum to be followed by the students of his age, showing indirectly the advancement that has been achieved in the field of education since the time of the early dharma writers, still he lays emphasis on the Vedic studies, and determines the period of studentship in that background. Thus he declares: 'For each Vēda, the brahmacharya should be twelve years or five. Some say it should be till they are completely acquired.'<sup>25</sup>

Vijñānēśvara explains the above account as meaning that when marriage (i.e.: entry into the second stage of house-holder) is not possible owing to poverty etc. brahmacharya must be performed for twelve years for each Vēda; in case of inability, five years. The account clears some difficulty for if one studies for twelve years each Vēda he would remain a student for forty-eight years when it would be impossible for him to begin afresh a married life. This should be treated as exceptional case. The second alternative is a more practical one. A Brāhmaṇa commencing his study at the age of eight would remain in that case a Brahmachārin upto his twenty-eighth year, and then he would marry and be a house holder; in case of Kṣatriya upto his thirtyfirst and a Vaiśya upto his thirty second year. It is really difficult to determine how far these ideals were observed in practice, for as

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25 प्रतिवेदं ब्रह्मचर्यं द्वादशाब्दानि पञ्च वा ।

Yājñā: I, 36.

Yājñavalkya himself says 'having unfailingly maintained his studentship he shall marry a girl endowed with good qualities'<sup>26</sup> In such a case we have to assume that no member of the upper caste used to marry before twentieth year. We may note in this connection a few of the early injunctions:

(a) Manu ordains: 'The vow (of studying) three Vēdas under a teacher must be kept for thirty-six years, or for half that time, or for a quarter, or until the (student) has perfectly learnt them.'

'(A student) who has studied in due order the three Vēdas or two or even one only, without breaking the (rules of) studentship, shall enter the order of householders.'<sup>27</sup>

(b) Bōdhāyana says: 'The (term of the) studentship for (learning the) Vēdas, as kept by the ancients, (is) forty-eight years or twenty-four or twelve years for each Vēda or at least one year for each Kāṇḍa or until (the Vēda) has been learned: for life is uncertain.'<sup>28</sup>

(c) According to Gautama: 'One should keep his studentship over one Vēda, for twelve years; or twelve years for each Vēda; or overall, till they have been got up.'<sup>29</sup>

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26 अविपुतब्रह्मचर्यो लक्षण्यां स्त्रियमुद्वहेत् ।

Yājñā: III. 52.

27 Manu: III, 1-2.

28 अष्टाचत्वारिंशद्वर्षाणि पौराणां वेदब्रह्मचर्यम् । चतुर्विंशतिर्द्वादशं वा प्रतिवेदम् । संवत्सरारामं वा प्रतिकाण्डम् । ग्रहणान्तं वा जीवितस्यास्थिरत्वात् ।

Baudhāyana, 1.3, 1.4.

29 द्वादशावर्षाण्येकवेदे ब्रह्मचर्यं चरेत् । प्रतिद्वादशं वा । सर्वेषु ग्रहणान्तं वा ।

Gautama: II, 52.4.

The education that the brahmachārin received at the feet of his master was free one. Yājñavalkya says that ‘having finished the Vēda or the Vratas, (vows to be observed by the student) or both of them, and having given presents to the guru, let him bathe (or) with his permission.’<sup>30</sup> The implication of the account, according to Vijñānēśvara, is that if the student is unable he may not make any present to the teacher at the completion of his study, and further that ‘this adjustment of the various alternatives (whether he should study one Vēda or two or all or vrata only etc.) must be made having regard to time, ability etc. of the pupil.’ As Bālam Bhatta points out, this shows that a snātaka or a Vēdic graduate was of three kinds: (a) the vidyā snātaka, who has studied the Vēdas; (b) the vrata snātaka, who has performed the vratas or vowed observances of a student; and (c) the ubhaya snātaka, who has completed both the Vēdas and the vratas (Cf: Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra, II. 5. 325). We should note two facts in the above account of Yājñavalkya: first, there were students or brahmachārins who learnt discipline only at the house of the teacher; and secondly, though the student learnt various subjects at the feet of his master, special emphasis was laid on the study of the Vēdas and it was in the background of his Vedic study, that his studenthood was considered in the society.

From Manu’s account also it is clear that the teacher did not charge any fee for maintaining the student. Thus he observes: ‘He who knows the secret law must not present

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30 गुरवे तु वरं दत्त्वा स्नायीत तदनुज्ञया ।  
वेदं व्रतानि वा पारं नीत्वा ह्युभयमेव वा ॥

Yājña: I, 51.

any gift to his teacher before (the samāvartana); but when with the permission of the teacher he is about to take the (final) bath, let him procure (a present) for the venerable man according to his ability, viz.: a field, gold, a cow, a horse, a parasol and shoes, a seat, grain, (even) vegetables, (and thus) give pleasure to his teacher.<sup>31</sup> The Gr̥hya sūtra and the Dharma sūtra writers also make somewhat similar observations.

Though the brahmachārin was taught and maintained gratis by the teacher he had to collect his food for himself by begging 'from blameless Brāhmaṇas for supporting the body<sup>32</sup> and 'whatever he obtains, he present it to him' i.e.: that is his teacher.'<sup>33</sup> Vijñānēśvara holds that 'the specification of Brāhmaṇa from whom the brahmachārin was to beg signifies the case when it is possible to get one of that class, and it is not an imperative rule. The brahmachārin may beg alms from the three upper classes and may beg from the Śūdras in case of distress only.'

The life of the brahmachārin was a very austere one. He had to get up early in the morning, take his bath and perform his prayer according to the prescribed rules. The bath also was to be performed with prayers addressed to the water (Vijñānēśvara on Yāj: I-22).

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31 Manu: II, 245-46.

32 ब्राह्मणेषु चरेद्भिक्षमनिन्देष्वात्मवृत्तये ।

Yājñā: I-29.

33 लब्धं चास्मै निवेदयेत् ।

Yājñā: I-27.

The commentator quotes Rīgvēda X. 9. 1-3 as the necessary mantra for the purpose. It runs as follows:

- ‘O ye Āpas (all pervading Divine currents) since you are the source of pleasure, help us therefore by giving us energy, so that we may feel the Mighty Sound.’
- ‘That essence of yours which is most auspicious, of that a share give us here. As loving mothers (suck the babe).
- ‘O waters! we approach thee all for our sins to be destroyed. Give us strength to cope with sin.’

The brahmachārin was also required to mutter the following mantra from the Yajurveda (xx. 20):

- ‘Ōm, even as the perspiring gets relief from the shade of the tree, as bathing removes the impurities of the body, as the clarified butter becomes purified by its purifying agent - so let the waters purify me from all sins.’

After taking his morning bath with the above mantras, the brahmachārin had to offer arghya to the Sun and then repeat the Gāyatrī mantra,<sup>34</sup> and do other auxiliary performances

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34 स्नानमब्देवतैर्मन्त्रैर्मर्जनं प्राणसंयमः ।

सूर्यस्य चाप्युपस्थानं गायत्र्याः प्रत्यहं जपः ।

Yāma: I. 22.

by the process of prāṇāyāma,<sup>35</sup> which as Bālam Bhatta points out, consists of three processes: first, breathing in slowly through one nostril; secondly, by retaining the breath by closing both the nostrils; and, thirdly, breathing out slowly by the other nostril. In performing prāṇāyāma the left nostril should be closed by pressing it with the ring and little fingers of the right hand and air drawn in through the right nostril. Then the right nostril should also be closed by the thumb, and the air retained. Then the ring and little fingers should be raised and the air expelled from the left nostril.

The student had to perform the above worship in the morning, sitting eastward till the Sun was seen, and also in the evening, sitting westward till the stars rose.<sup>36</sup> After thus performing the twilight prayers, he had to perform both morning and evening the fire ceremony i.e. as the commentator explains, throwing fuel etc. into the fire, according to rules of one's own Gṛhyasūtras.

On the religious duties of the brahmachārins Manu makes the following observations:

- 'Every day, having bathed and being purified, he must offer libations of waters to the Gods, sages and manes, worship the (images of) gods, and place fuel on (the sacred fire).'

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35 प्रतिप्रणवसंयुक्तं त्रिरयं प्राणसंयमः ।

Yājñā: I. 23.

36 Ibid.: I, 24-25.



- ‘Purified by sipping water, he shall daily worship during both twilights with a concentrated mind in a pure place, muttering the prescribed texts according to the rule.’<sup>37</sup>

It may be noted that in the above account of Manu there is no direct reference to Prāṇāyāma. Again, while Yājñavalkya enjoins that the twilight prayers should be offered in a sitting posture, Gautama states that ‘the morning prayer should be offered standing, while the evening one seated; the former while the stars are visible, the latter before the rising of the stars’<sup>38</sup>

Regarding the food to be taken by a brahmachārin, Yājñavalkya states:

- ‘Having performed the fire sacrifice and obtained the permission of the Guru, and after having done āpōśana work, let him eat, with speech controlled, honouring the food and not abusing it.’
- ‘Performing the duties of a student, he should not eat, otherwise than in distress, the food begged from one person only. A Brāhmaṇa may, at his pleasure, eat such food, in a śrāddha (at a funeral meal), but without breaking the condition of his vow (as regards the kind of food)’.

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37 Manu: II, 176, 222.

38 तिष्ठेत् पूर्वमासीतोत्तरां सज्योतिष्याज्योतिषो दर्शनाद्वाग्यतः ॥

Gautama: II, 17.

- 'He should renounce honey, meat, ointments, orts, sourness, women, harming animals, looking at the Sun, vulgar speech and slander etc.'<sup>39</sup>

In Manu (II: 54-55) we do not find the rule that the brahmachārin should eat with his speech controlled. Again, there is some difference between Manu and Yājñavalkya regarding the items to be avoided by the brahmachārin. Thus Manu says that a brahmachārin should abstain from honey, meat, perfumes, garlands, substances (used for) flavouring (food), women, all substances turned acid, and from doing injury to living creatures, and from anointing (his body), applying collyrium to his eyes, from the use of shoes and of an umbrella (or parasol), from (sensual) desires, anger, covetousness, dancing, singing and playing (musical instruments).<sup>40</sup> The earlier Dharmasūtra writers make the list longer even e. g., Gautama forbids riding on conveyance,<sup>41</sup> while Āpastamba enjoins avoiding salts.<sup>42</sup> Yājñavalkya's account shows that in his time the life of the student was gradually becoming easier. At the end of the student life many practical instructions were given which are of

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39 कृताग्निकार्यो भुञ्जीत वाग्यतो गुर्वनुज्ञया ।  
 आपोशनक्रियापूर्वं सत्कृत्यान्नमकुत्सयन् ॥  
 ब्रह्मचर्ये स्थितो नैकमन्नमद्यादनापदि ।  
 ब्राह्मणः काममश्रीयाच्छ्रद्धे व्रतमपीडयन् ॥  
 मधुमांसाञ्जनोच्छिष्टशुक्लप्राणिहिसनम् ।  
 भास्करालोकनाश्लीलपरिवादादि वर्जयेत् ॥

Yājñavalkya: I, 31.33.

40 Manu: II, 177-78.

41 Gautama: II, 19.

42 तथा क्षारलवणमधुमांसानि ।

Āpastamba: I, 2.23.

very high value, such as 'speak the Truth; lead a pious life' etc. (मत्यं वद; धर्मं चर..... Taittirīya Upaniṣath I- ii).

After the student has completed his course of studies, he leaves the place of the Ācārya and journeys back home; this is called Samāvartana (Returning back).<sup>43</sup> He is now to take a bath (स्नान) symbolizing his 'washing off' as it were, of the Bramhacarya Vrata and is therefore known as a Snātaka.<sup>44</sup>

Thus the above discussions clearly reveal that the Upanayana Samskāra, which is very important one among the educational Samskāras, marks the dawn of a new era in the life of a initiate. He was no more a child and was introduced to the life of perfect and stern discipline. The ceremony symbolised the fact that the student was a traveller, starting for the boundless realm of knowledge. To reach his destination, he was asked to be firm and steadfast, like a stone, in his determination. A complete harmony between him and his Ācārya was also essential. In his mission, the student was assured the help of all gods and creatures. If the student acted up to the symbolisms and suggestions of the Samskāra, he was found to be a successful scholar and a fullfledged man, fit to share the responsibilities of the world. Let me conclude this chapter with the following quotation from the Śatapatha Brāmhṇa which quite admirably sums up the concept of education as conceived by our ancestors:

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43 Sāṅkhyāyana Gr. Sū.: II-18; I-4 etc.

44 Ibid., III, 1.

‘Now, then, in praise of learning; learning and teaching are a source of pleasure to man; he becomes ready minded, or mentally well equipped (युक्तमनाः) and independent of others, and day by day acquires prosperity. He sleeps peacefully; he is the best physician for himself; and (peculiar) to him are restraint of the senses, delight in steadiness of mind (एकारामता), development of intelligence, fame and last but not the least in importance, ‘the task of perfecting the people.’<sup>45</sup>

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45 अथातः स्वाध्यायप्रशंसा । प्रिये स्वाध्याय प्रवचने भवतः; युक्तमना भवति । अपराधीनोऽहरहरर्थान्संघायते । सुखं स्वपिति । परमचिकित्सकः आत्मनो भवति । इन्द्रियसंयमश्च एकारामता च प्रज्ञावृद्धिर्यशो लोकपक्तिः ॥

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa: X, 5-7-1.

CHAPTER - X

PRESENT DAY POSITION OF UPANAYANA  
AND OTHER SAṂSKĀRAS  
AND  
SUGGESTIONS TO REVIVE THEM

The Saṁskāras, it may be noted, in modern times have in most cases fallen into oblivion. Not to speak of other members of the caste, the brahmins even do not observe them all in the manner they have been described and prescribed in the Śāstras. The reason for such a state of affairs is not far to seek. The western outlook of life has to a considerable extent influenced our attitude to life. There is also the question of expense and economic condition are partly responsible for the dwindling away of some of the Saṁskāras like Upanayana because of the fact that these rites in course of time assumed a festive nature necessitating huge expense. For instance, we notice that in our Dakshina Kannada at least at the present days, Brahmins, specially the enlightened classes, do not care to go to the extent of performing all the formalities of Upanayana. What they do is that, they go to a holy place nearby (say Sri Subrahmaṇya Kṣētra or Sri Rāghavendra Swāmy Mutt) or a Kalyāṇamaṇṭapa and get the rite performed in a miniature form. This shows that the intricacies and long formalities are to a certain extent responsible for dying out of certain Saṁskāras.

We may observe that practically speaking for the Brahmins only, the two, Upanayana and Vivāha are observed now-a-days. The formalities in most of the cases have been

dropped. The pre-marriage and post-marriage technicalities are hardly observed. In some case absence of expert priests with technical knowledge is responsible for disuse of certain rites, the observance of which requires expert advice. The rite of Garbhādhāna is falling into obeyance, probably owing to the rapid rise in the marriageable age of brahmaṇa girls. Identical is the lot of Puṃsavana and Sīmantōnnayana. Nāmakaraṇa and Annaprāśana had in their origination, the element of love and affection. These two have almost gone out of use and the scanty form in which they are observed in certain cases is also devoid of any citations from vedic texts and the whole affair is strictly popular in design. In most cases the Caula is performed on the day of the Upanayana and Samāvartana is also performed a few days after Upanayana.

In this connection I think it is profitable to quote the learned opinion of Dr. R. B. Pandey. He observes: 'Like other socio-religious institutions the Saṃskāras also, after serving their purpose for a long time declined in course of time due to their internal weakness and external circumstances, which developed in the history of the Hindus. The creative stage of the Saṃskāras was followed by the critical, conservative and imitative ones, when the Saṃskāras were codified and commented upon, compiled and confusedly and poorly imitated. The result was that they become static and stultified and lost their power of elasticity and adaptation. The time and ideology under which they evolved were left far behind and new social and religious forces were operating in the society, which did not fully conform to old social and religious institutions. Buddhism, Jainism and the

many new cults of devotion diverted the attention of the people from ritualistic exactitude to devotional practices of worship. The linguistic difficulty was also responsible for the decline of the Saṃskāras. The mantras recited in the Saṃskāras were from the Vēdas and the procedure of the Saṃskāras was couched in archaic Sanskrit and the both have continued to be till today. Though Sanskrit has ceased to be the popular language of India and is intelligible only to a few learned persons, the priests have never cared to change the language of the Saṃskāras, as they are always anxious to preserve the mystic and obscure nature of the religious ceremonies. The natural consequence is the apathy and indifference of the masses towards the Saṃskāras, which have become a sealed book to them.<sup>1</sup>

Life today moves in a hasty pace. There is no time 'to stand and stare'. People hardly have any leisure to devote themselves to acts which have no bearing on their economic upliftment. All thoughts are concentrated on one point as to how one may survive economically. When one has to think always in terms of interest of this world, it is natural that spiritual life is bound to be overlooked.

This speed of life is observed in literary sphere also. The age of epics and big romances has yielded to that of short stories. The energy that is needed for writing and reading voluminous literature is gone.

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1 Dr. R. B. Pandey; Hindu Saṃskāras; Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi. 1969; Pp. 278-279

Moreover, a tendency for specialisation is bound to develop under the circumstances. The totality of the activities of life has ceased and partisan spirit operates. This will explain why such long-drawn rites are dying out day by day. But the traditional and conventional influence has operated to a great extent to preserve them even in simplified form. To quote the words of Dr. Pandey:

‘The far-reaching cause of the decline of the Saṃskāras was the development of the society from its primitive conditions and the bifurcation and specialisation of the different branches of human activities. Originally the Saṃskāras combined religious beliefs and practices, social customs and laws, educational schemes, rules regarding health and hygiene etc. In course of time all these aspects of human life developed more or less independently. So the Saṃskāras lost most of their contents and importance, only its religious sanctity survived in its truncated form. The Saṃskāras, which once constituted a serious attempt at the reformation of man, were reduced to mere ceremonies. The Saṃskāras today are in majority of cases a matter of routine benefit of effective influence.’<sup>2</sup>

There is no denying of the fact that even today in mind and spirit the Hindus believe in the importance of vedic tradition. Centuries after centuries this tradition has been subjected to cultural attacks and molestations from rival religious schools. To guard against these attacks, the priestly class tightened their grip in stronger manners, rendering the rules more rigid. Side by side, in due course of time went on the process of assimilations. The

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid; p. 279



smṛti texts are full of illustrations where the writers on law were compelled by the demand of circumstances to change the age old provisions of law. The spirit of adjustment operated well up to a certain period, but in course of time the country did not find intelligent and prudent writers on law who could keep pace with the changing condition of the society. On the other hand western education conquered the minds of young men with alluring benefits of the materialistic world. The spiritual side was as a consequence undervalued. The Saṃskāras, which originally had spiritual values gradually lost their meaning and in the absence of proper interpreters tended to become weaker and weaker. Rightly Dr. Pandey observes:

‘Hinduism assimilated foreign elements in its fold throughout its long history. These elements conformed to the broad outline of Hinduism, but they did not find minute ritualistic details congenial to them. They performed the most important Saṃskāras like the Vivāha and the Antyēṣṭi, - (Funeral) which they could not escape, but they had little use of the minor ones. The advent of Islam in India eclipsed Hindu culture and in the major part of the country there was no free opportunity to perform religious rites. For their safety the masses abstained from ostentatious ritualistic procedure and only a few orthodox families performed them at their great risk. The later and modern impact of materialism from the west has attacked Hinduism on a different plane. Through western educational system and foreign medium of instruction it has uprooted the majority of young people receiving this new education from their moorings both intellectually and emotionally. It has made its

converts hostile towards the traditional life of the country, sceptic towards spiritual values of life and impatient of any religious discipline. They are getting lost to the very sacramental conception of life. This constitutes the gravest menace to the Saṃskāras'.<sup>3</sup>

We have here to add that there was definitely an evolution in the development of the number of Saṃskāras from two to forty. In the process of development some newer ones have been added, which others have been dropped. Teritorial influence was no less contributory to this end. Thus we find in the Vaikhānasa Gṛhya Sūtra a rite like pravāsāgamana.<sup>4</sup> There is very likelihood that this developed at a stage when for economical or other reasons journey to foreign country or to distant place was undertaken. In the normal stage of the society people hardly undertook long journey. Therefore this rite did not find suitable recognition at the hands of other writers on Gṛhyasūtra. Similarly we may explain the case of Dantōdgama. This was perhaps motivated by medical considerations. The health of the baby tends to degenerate during the period of toething. Therefore someone might have been urged by the desire to observe this rite to ensure the good health of the baby. This did not however find favour of other writers. So the point to note here is this that as these rites developed due to various influences, they could not retain their existence in toto. Only those which are common and those whose purposes are more or less intelligible have been retained even today. People have not, even in this enlightened materialistic world, given up all respect for spiritualism and religion. Even

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid; p. 279

<sup>4</sup> Vaikhā. Gṛ. Sū: I. 1.

the non-believers go through certain important Saṃskāras up to this day for social prestige or to please their relatives. What is needed at present, in my humble opinion, is simplification of the rites and properly trained priests to interpret the importance of the rites to the people, who are no less eager to understand them.

The purpose of Saṃskāras like Upanayana in welding the individual members of the kinship into a meaningful assembly called a family is of great sociological significance. The parents not only create the biological entity called a child, they also create a spiritual entity. They form a part of a complex society. The impressions created sink to the depths of consciousness of the child during its pre-school days and play a vital part in the life of an adult. Modern research has realised the importance of pre-school treatment, education and training for children and their effects on the moral and sociological traits of the adult. In this process the concept of home and family occupy a very important position. Even when the human being grows spiritually so as to consider the whole world as his home, and the whole creation as his family, the seed thoughts of home and family continue to colour his emotions. Hence the vedic expressions - 'यत्र विश्वं भवत्येकनीडम्' and 'वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्'. The Saṃskāras, especially of Upanayana stage, are meant for this purpose.

Though Saṃskāras are aimed at the welfare of the individual, there is no Saṃskāra which does not produce as a by-product, the well-being of the entire creation. Further, the effect of the mantras and rituals are so great that they purify the mind of the performer even when he performs them in a mechanical way.

Universal education is one of the most popular slogans heard today. By making Upanayana compulsory, the society has made education compulsory. Education has to be received as a direct experience and through instructions and demonstrations from the life of the teacher by the student staying with the former. At every stage of the studies, new vows are to be taken and before beginning the study of a new portion of the vedas, a new observance has to be made. Education as Saṃskāra is not mere book learning but one of character, experience and productivity.

Saṃskāras like Upanayana lead man from a crude animal-like life to make him realise the spark of the divine that dwells in him. Saṃskāras in general and Upanayana in particular play a great role in the personal, social and spiritual life of the person. It is art, religion, sociology and search for excellence rolled into one. Modern science too tells us that the man-making process starts at the stage of conception of the child. It is up to us to find new relevance in our ancient traditions.

Upanayana is one among the Saṃskāras which have lost their traditional meaning and cultural significance due to our ignorance and materialistic thinking. Infact, some regard it as ridiculous and meaningless. Yet the social importance of Upanayana as a source of deriving status, prestige and power has continued in modern days.

The misapprehensions regarding the Upanayana Saṃskāra should be removed from the minds of the people through proper education. The significance of each and every items of Upanayana should be properly explained to the parents and the boy to be initiated.

A sort of mental preparation is necessary to them. Upanayana is a domestic affair and not a public function. So the pomp and the other irrelevant ceremonies should be eliminated. If one feels to celebrate it grandly making it a societal occasion, it is suggested to invite his friends and public on the next day of Upanayana for a grand dinner and not on that religious occasion. The rituals and other religious ceremonies of Upanayana Saṃskāra are to be confined only to the boy to be initiated, his parents, priests, family members and the nearest relatives. The religious atmosphere can be created then only and the Saṃskāra becomes more meaningful and purposeful. The boy should be persuaded to perform Sandhyāvandanam and Agnikārya etc., after Upanayana. A priest may be appointed to teach him Sandhyāvandanam, Agnikārya etc., if the father is not efficient and resourceful. However the boy should be encouraged to discharge these religious duties. He should be impressed that the concentration, will-power etc. will be increasing by performance of Sandhyāvandanam. Then he will definitely get the benefit of Upanayana Saṃskāra and his attitude, behaviour and way of life will be quite different from others.

Hence the purpose of Upanayana Saṃskāra in a person's personal, social and spiritual life is very great. It is based on faith and weaves the individual into the fabric of the society. The performance of Upanayana Saṃskāra removes the evil influences and invokes the beneficial ones. The Upanayana Saṃskāra serves a cultural purpose by getting for the individual, wealth, health, intellect and all that he could desire for, within the framework of Dharma. The Upanayana also helps a person in forming and developing one's personality.

It is a process of consciously moulding the character of the individuals instead of letting the people grow in a haphazard way. Upanayana Saṃskāra also systematises the social language of self expression at the time of joy or sorrow. Finally it confers on a man a higher religious sanctity by removing the impurities and enabling him to practice those divine virtues which separate man from animals and take him to the Gods.

Some may say that there are number of rituals in Upanayana Saṃskāra. They consume more time and money. Hence these items should be minimised. Actually our prayōgakāras have tried their best to minimise the rituals. For example we can see the following kārīkā of Upanayana.<sup>5</sup>

कृच्छ्रं चरेद्भोजनं वापने च निरीक्षणं स्यादुपलेपनाद्यम् ।  
 संस्कृत्य सर्पिः पटकृष्णचर्म यज्ञोपवीताचमनादि होमः ॥  
 जलाञ्जलिस्सूर्यनिरीक्षणं च कस्येतिभाषा सगुरुप्रसादः ।  
 समिन्निधानं श्रवणोपदेशः हृत्स्पर्शनं मौञ्जिपलाशदण्डः ॥  
 शिक्षा ततः स्विष्टिकृदादिहोमः समापनं तत्र च मातृभिक्षा ॥

There are number of such kārīkā of prayōgakāras, which minimise the rituals from time to time. After considering the present day position of Saṃskāras we can recommend the following as the minimum programmes of Upanayana:

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| १. कृच्छ्राचरणम्     | ११. दक्षिणहस्तग्रहणम् |
| २. मातृभोजनम्        | १२. सूर्यवीक्षणम्     |
| ३. चौलम् and स्नानम् | १३. अग्निकार्यम्      |
| ४. कौपीनधारणम्       | १४. सावित्र्युपदेशः   |

5 R̥gvēda Prayōga Dēpikā; p. 255.

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| ५. वस्त्रधारणम्      | १५. हृदयालम्बनम्         |
| ६. अग्निधारणम्       | १६. मेखलाबन्धनम्         |
| ७. यज्ञोपवीतधारणम्   | १७. दण्डग्रहणम्          |
| ८. आचमनम्            | १८. ब्रह्मचारीनियमोपदेशः |
| ९. प्रधानहोमः        | १९. मातृभिक्षा           |
| १०. अञ्जल्यवक्षारणम् | २०. अनुप्रवचनीयहोमः      |
| २१. मेधाजननम्        |                          |

Significance of these programmes is already explained in this thesis. These programmes also differ from place to place and one tradition to other. However for the time being, we can accept these as the minimum programme of Upanayana.

The present-day Hindu asks only questions about his own religion but does not care to find out the answers. It is not at all surprising to note that sincerity and steadfastness without understanding the meaning and purpose of any ritual and its performance result in the incurring of heavy expenditure.

The performance of Hindu Saṃskāras need not be costly at all, for they can be gone through at home by the concerned individuals and elders, and some Saṃskāras can be performed even internally as well. The outer performance is also important, particularly for educative and social purposes. Therefore, if the knowledge of the vēdas is spread, means may be found whereby not even the poorest have to go without having to perform Upanayana and other Saṃskāras.

Upanayana marks the dawn of a new era in the life of the initiate. He is no more a child and is introduced to the life of perfect and stern discipline. The ceremony symbolizes the fact that the student is a traveller, starting for the boundless realm of knowledge. To reach this destination, he is asked to be firm and steadfast, like a stone, in his determination. A complete harmony between him and his Ācārya is also essential. In his mission, the student is assured the help of all gods and creatures. The ideals before him are Indra, the lord of all gods, and Agni, the most brilliant element in the world, the one suggestive of power and position and the other indicative of life and light. If the student acts up to the symbolisms and suggestions of the Saṃskāra he is found to be a successful scholar and fulfilled man, fit to share the responsibilities of the society.

Thus the Upanayana and other Saṃskāras help in the refinement and purification of human life, facilitate the development of personality, impart sanctity and importance to the human body, bless all material and spiritual aspirations of man and ultimately prepare him for an easy and happy end from this world of complexities and problems. They are the expressions of human beliefs, sentiments, aspirations, hopes and fears and they cater to human needs. Though the evolutionary process of life has been analysed and studied, the origin of life, its constituents and their combinations are still puzzling the human mind. The mystic touch of the invisible makes man crave for the sanctification of his life. The great Ācāryas of ancient India evolved the Hindu way of life with all its Saṃskāras, āśramas and varṇadharmas. They placed before the Hindu society, the puruṣārthas-dharma,



artha, kāma and mōkṣa as the four fold objects of life with the ultimate and supreme goal as mōkṣa. The education of man, beginning with the Upanayana Saṃskāra which gives a rebirth to the child, plays a very key role in moulding the destiny of human life.

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